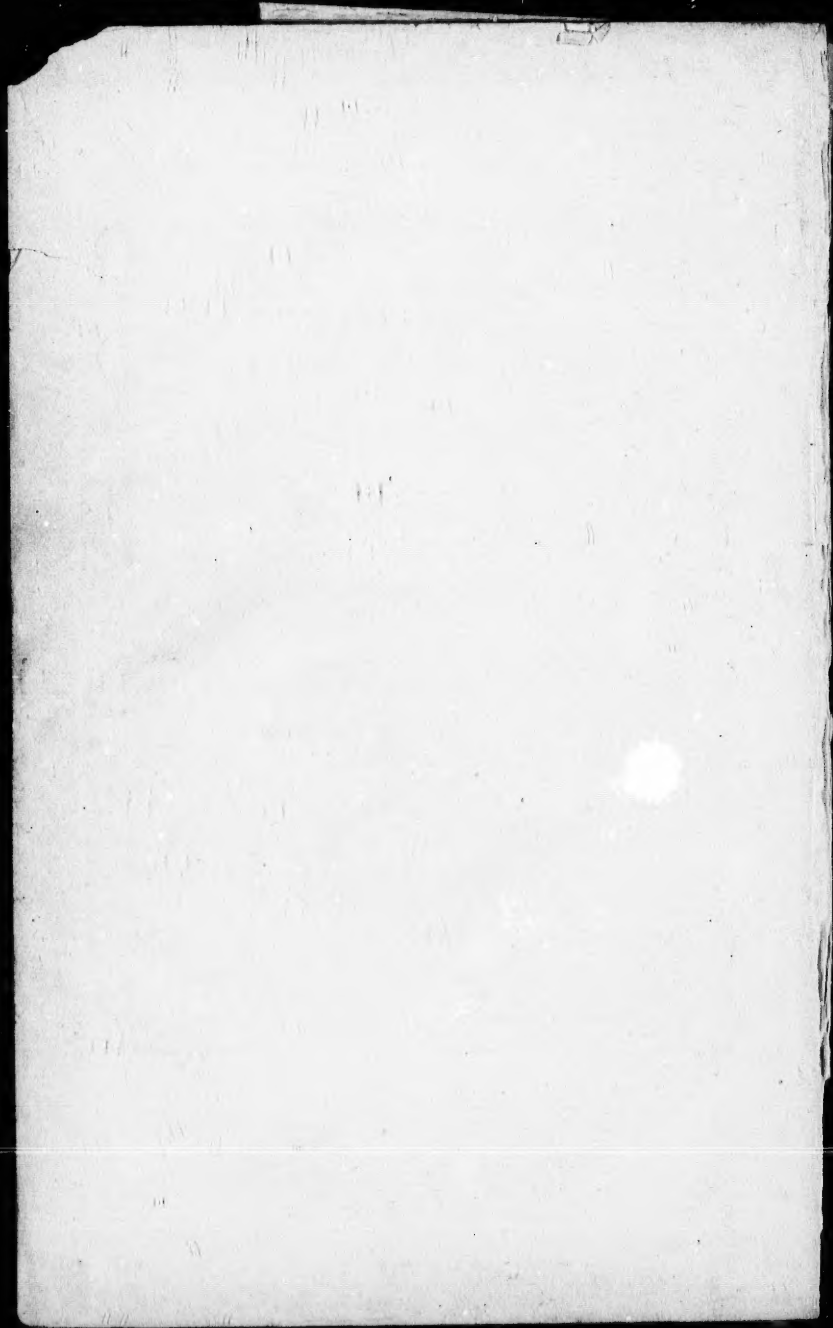
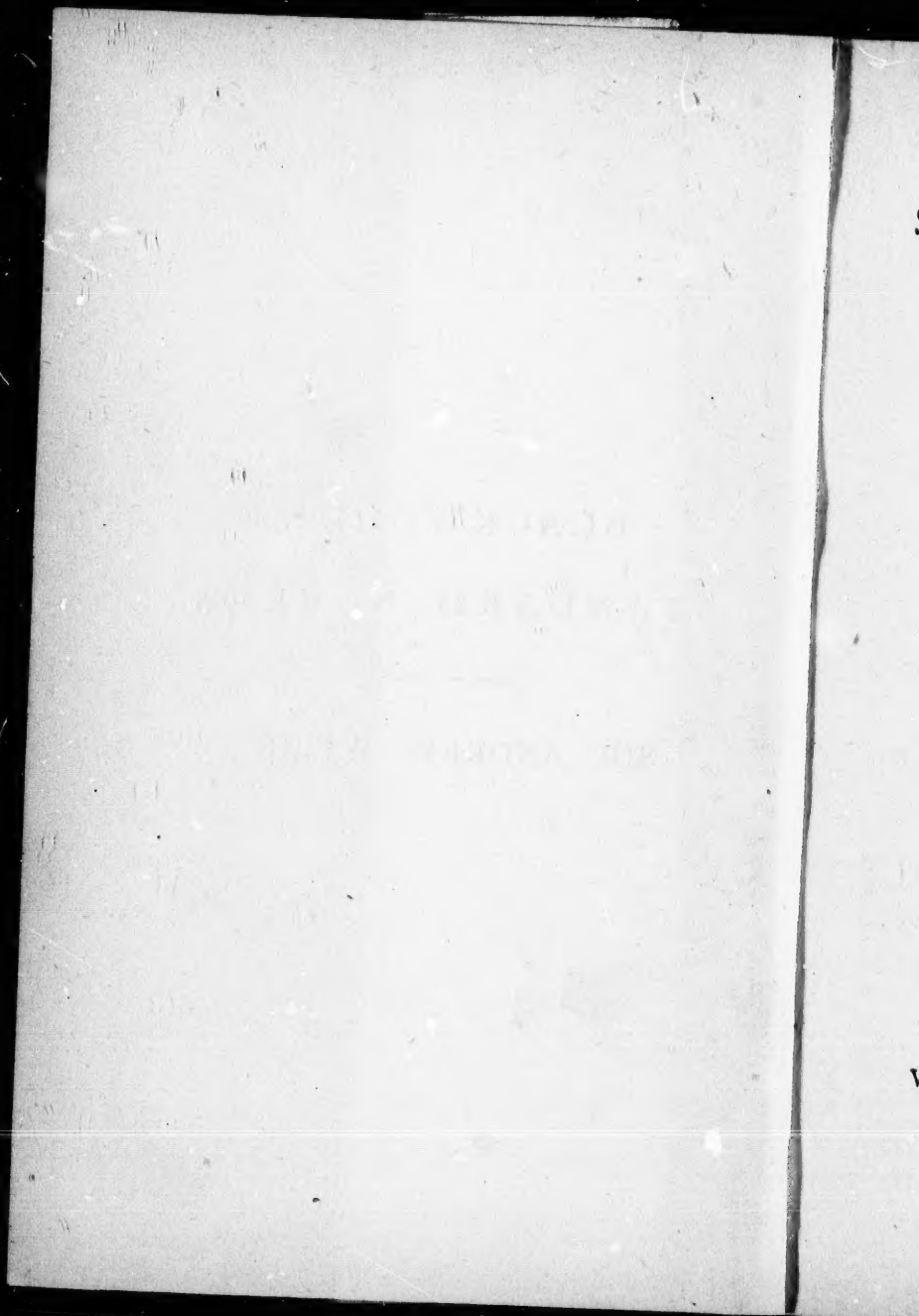




BLACKWOOD'S
STANDARD NOVELS

SIR ANDREW WYLIE



SIR ANDREW WYLIE

OF THAT ILK

BY

JOHN GALT

NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXVIII

1868

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COTTAGE.

SIR ANDREW WYLIE, like the generality of great geniuses, was born and bred in very humble circumstances. By the early death of both his parents, he was consigned in infancy to the care of his maternal grandmother, Martha Docken, one of those clachan carlins who keep alive, among the Scottish peasantry, the traditions and sentiments which constitute so much of the national character.

This old woman resided in the hamlet of Stoneyholm, in the shire of Ayr. Her sole breadwinner was her spinning-wheel, and yet she was cheerfully contented with her lot; for it had pleased heaven to bless her with a blithe spirit, and a religious trust in the goodness of Providence.

The furniture of her cottage, in addition to Andrew's cradle, and that was borrowed, consisted of one venerable elbow-chair, with a tall perpendicular back curiously carved, a family-relic of better days, enjoyed by her own or her husband's ancestors; two buffet-stools, one a little larger than the other; a small oaken claw-foot table; her wheel, a hand-reel, a kail-pot, and a skillet, together with a scanty providing of bedding, and a chest, that was at once coffer, wardrobe, and ambry.

Behind the house she had a patch of some five or six falls of ground for a garden, which she delved and planted herself; and

the rent she paid for the whole was ten shillings per annum. The gathering of this sum, after she received the heavy handful of Andrew, a weak and ailing baby, required no little care. But instead of repining at the burden, she often declared to the neighbours that he was "great company, and though at times a wee fashious, he's an auld-farand bairn, and kent a raisin frae a black clock before he had a tooth; putting the taen in his mouth wi' a smirk, but skreighing like desperation at the sight o' the ither."

During the summer of the first year after Andrew had been brought home to her, she was generally seen sitting with her wheel, basking in the sun, at the gable of her cottage, with her grandson at her side in her biggest stool, turned upside down, amusing himself with the cat.

Andrew was a small and delicate child; but he grew apace, and every day, in the opinion of his grandmother, improved in his looks. "His cen," as she said to her kimmers while she dandled him at the door as they stopped to speak to her in passing, "are like gowans in a May morning, and his laugh's as blithe as the lilt o' the linty."

Philosophers, in these expressions, may discover the fond anticipations of hopeful affection looking forward to a prosperous fortune for the child; but Andrew, for a long time, showed no indication of possessing any thing in common with the talents that are usually supposed requisite to ensure distinction or riches. In his boyhood, however, Martha frequently observed "that he was a pawkie laddie, and if he wasna a deacon at book 'air, he kent as weel as the maister himsel' how mony blue beans it taks to mak five."

The "maister" here spoken of was Dominie Tannyhill, one of those meek and modest novices of the Scottish priesthood, who, never happening to meet with any such stroke of good fortune as the lot of a tutor in a laird's family, wear out the even tenor of their blameless days in the little troubles of a village school.

At the time when Andrew was placed under his care, the master seemed to be about forty, but he was probably two or three years younger. He was pale and thin, and under the middle size, and stooped a little, as if his head had been set on

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somewhat awry. It proceeded, however, from a habit which he had acquired, in consequence of being short-sighted, and accustomed to write and read with his ear almost touching the paper. At times he would erect himself even into something like an air of dignity, and change his lowly and diffident tone into the voice and accent of an earnest and impassioned eloquence.

Every thing in his appearance indicated a moderate spirit, in perfect accordance with the mildness of his manners, and his few and humble acquirements; but there was an apostolic energy in his thoughts, when his own feelings were roused, or when he addressed himself to move those of others, with which nature at times showed how willing she was, if fortune had so pleased, to make him a pathetic and impressive preacher. Whether he ever felt the longings of ambition, or rather, whether he ever repined at the unheeded and unknown estate in which he was left to pass away, like a sequestered spring, whose pure and gentle course is only seen in the meadows by a little narrow edging of richer verdure, could never be discovered in the still sobriety of his placid temper; but if all other passions were hushed in his quiet bosom, the kindly disposition which he showed towards every living thing begat in the minds of his pupils an affectionate respect, of far greater power in the little state and commonwealth of his school, than would have been yielded to the authority of more arrogant abilities, backed by the taws, that dreaded satrap of Scottish didactic discipline.

In his dress, the master was as remarkable as in his mind and manners. His linen was always uncommonly neat, and his coat and vest of raven grey, though long threadbare, never showed a broken thread, nor the smallest stationary speck of dust. His breeches, of olive thickset, were no less carefully preserved from stains; and his dark blue worsted gamashins, reaching above the knees in winter, not only added to the comfort of his legs, but protected his stockings. Between his cottage and the church, or in the still evenings when he was seen walking solitary along the untrodden parts of the neighbouring moor, he wore a small cocked-hat, and, as his eyes were weak and tender, in bright weather he commonly slackened the loops,

and, turning the point round, converted the upright gable of the back into a shade.

If the master, like other potentates, had a favourite, it was certainly our hero, at whose droll and whimsical remarks he was sometimes observed almost to smile. For Andrew was not long at school till he showed that he was, at least with respect to his sayings, destined to attract notice. Indeed, the very first day when his grandmother herself led him to the door with his A B board in his hand, he got a name that he never lost. After the dismissal of the school, as he was playing with the other boys on the high-road, a carriage and four horses, with outriders, happened to pass, whirling along with the speed and pride of nobility. The school-boys, exhilarated by the splendour of a phenomenon, rare in those days in Stoneyholm, shouted with gladness as it passed, and our hero animated the shout into laughter, by calling out, "Weel dune, wee wheelie, the muckle ane canna catch you." From that time he was called "Wheelie;" but, instead of being offended by it, as boys commonly are by their nicknames, he bore it with the greatest good-humour; and afterwards, when he had learned to write, marked his books and copies with "Andrew Wheelie, his book." Even the master in time used to call him Wheelie, and insensibly fostered his taste for the odd and droll, by sometimes inviting him on a Saturday afternoon to partake of his pale and economical tea.

Andrew, who was naturally shrewd and observant, perceiving that the master was diverted by his humour, exerted himself on these occasions, by which exercise he gradually acquired a degree of readiness and self-possession in conversation, unusual among Scottish boys, and a happy vernacular phraseology, which he retained through life, and which, with those who had a true relish of character, was enjoyed as something as rare and original as the more elegant endowment of genius.

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CHAPTER II.

THE MAGPIE.

ANDREW was not distinguished among his school-fellows by any particular predilection for those amusements in which the boys of a country school are so adventurous; yet he was always a desired member of their nesting parties in the spring, and nutting excursions in the autumn; for his drollery and good humour knit their hearts to him; and if he seldom strung an egg of his own herrying, and absolutely, at all times, refused to risk his neck on the boughs of the hazel, he still brought home his full share of the holyday plunder.

On an occasion when a pyet's nest was sealed, only a single young one was found; and it was so strong and cunning, that it almost escaped from the grasp of Willy Cunningham, the boy who was sent up the tree. Some debate ensued on the division of the day's spoil, as to who should get the magpie. Andrew thought it ought to be given to Willy; but Cunningham, a frank and generous fellow, insisted that it *should* be Wheelie's, assigning as a reason, that Maggy, as Andrew had called it on the spot, "was an auld-farand thing like himsel", and would learn mair wi' him than wi' any other laddie at the school." Cunningham's proposal was ratified with a unanimous shout; and certainly no bird was ever more appropriately disposed of, for Andrew not only taught it to fetch and carry, and to filch with surprising address, but to speak several words with the most diverting distinctness. Maggy herself seemed to be right well pleased with her master; and, according to tradition, knew every word he said, with the discernment of a fairy.

When his companions, in the winter evenings, assembled round his grandmother's hearth, Maggy on those occasions placed herself between his legs; and as often as he said any thing that tickled their young fancies, turned up her cunning eye, and then jocosely chattered with her bill, as if she participated in their laughter.

The natural knavery of the magpie being cultivated by edu-

cation, she sometimes took it into her head to pilfer a little on her own account, and among others who suffered by her depredations, was the master. Between the school hours he always opened the windows to ventilate the room; and Maggy, as often as she could, availed herself of the opportunity to steal the boys' pens. It happened, however, that she went once too often, and was caught in the fact, with a new pen in her neb.

The master's own kindly humour induced him to pardon the bird; but as quarrels had arisen among the boys, occasioned by the loss of their pens, one accusing the other of the theft, he deemed it incumbent on him to rebuke the owner of the depredator. Accordingly, when the school assembled in the afternoon, he proclaimed silence; and taking up Maggy from under a basket where he had imprisoned her, he addressed the boys to the following effect:—

"Wha' amang you is guilty of keeping this misleart and unprincipled pyet, which is in the practice, whenever I leave the windows open to air the school, of coming in and stealing the pens from off the desks—carrying them awa' in its neb, without ony regard for the consequence?"

"It's mine," cried Andrew.

"Yours!" said the master; "then Wheelie, come ye here, for I maun point out to you the great error of such conduct. It is, as ye maun surely hae often heard, an auld and a true saying, that 'they wha begin wi' stealing needles and prins, may end wi' horned knout.' I'm no saying, so ye needna nicher, that ever this pyet will steal either horse or black cattle; but I would exhort you, nevertheless, to put it away, for it is a wicked bird, and may, by its pranks, entice you to do evil yoursel.' I dinna, however, recommend that ye should put the poor creature to death—that would be a cruelty; and, besides, ye ken it's but a feathered fowl, and no endowed wi' ony natural understanding of good and evil. It kens nae better, like the other beasts that perish, than to mak its living in a dishonest manner. Therefore, I counsel you just to take it to the woods, and set it at liberty, where it may fall out in some other's hand."

To this Andrew replied, with one of his pawkie glances, "It's but the first fault o' poor Maggy, master, and ye shouldna be

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overly severe, for she doesna ken, as ye say, that theeving's a
 sin; so I hope ye'll allow me to gie her an opportunity to tak up
 the steik in her stocking, and I'll admonish her weel when I get
 her hame—O ye sinfu' bird, are ye no ashamed of yoursel, to
 bring such disgrace on me?"

Maggy instantly testified her contrition and her thankfulness
 for the advocacy of her master, by hopping from the relaxed
 grasp of the good-natured dominie, and nestling in his bosom.

"It's really a droll beast, I maun alloo that, and I'll forgie you
 for this ae time," said the master; "but I would advise you to
 tie a string to its leg, and keep it in the house, for there's no
 telling what it may commit."

Andrew having thus obtained pardon for the magpie, she
 became a greater favourite than ever with the boys, and pro-
 duced precisely the effects which the master had feared. No-
 thing portable at open window was safe from her thievish bill,
 especially the thread papers of Miss Mizy Cunningham, the
 maiden aunt of the boy by whose good-nature our hero became
 master of the bird.

Miss Mizy lived in the mansion-house of Craiglands, close to
 the village, and had under her dominion Willy and his sister
 Mary; for their mother was dead, and the laird, their father,
 troubled himself very little with any earthly thing. He was, as
 Andrew described him, "a carle that dauner about the doors
 wi' his hands in his pouches, and took them out at meal-time."
 As for Miss Mizy herself, she was a perfect paragon of gentility
 and precision. However sloveni the grounds about the house
 were kept, the interior of the mansion was always in the trim-
 mest order; and nothing could exceed the nun-like purity of the
 worthy lady's own cambric-clad person.

It happened, by the death of a relation, that it was necessary
 the family should be put into mourning; and Miss Mizy, for
 this purpose, had bought herself a suit of sable, as well as a due
 portion of crape, and the other requisites of funereal sorrow.
 She was sitting, busy with her needle, making up the dress at
 the parlour window, which was open, when Andrew, one after-
 noon, with his pyet, came to ask Willy to go out with him.
 Maggy had so often teased Miss Mizy by pilfering her thread

papers, that justice and vengeance were sworn against her. This the boys were well aware of, but could not resist the temptation of "setting up the birses of aunty." Maggy, accordingly, was set loose. In a moment she was in at the window, and had seized a thread-case. Miss Mizy, however, before the pyet could escape, darted at her like a cat on a mouse; and almost in the same instant, poor Maggy, with its neck twisted, was flung out with such fury at Andrew that it almost knocked him down.

This was a dreadful outrage on the part of Miss Mizy; and the whole school participated in the revenge which was vowed against the murderer of Maggy; nor was ever revenge more complete. Next day, the principal companions of Andrew provided themselves with a large tub, which they filled with water from the laird's stable-yard; and Andrew, going up to the window where Miss Mizy was again sitting at her seam, while the other conspirators were secretly bringing the tub under the window, cried, "Ye auld rudons, what gart you kill my pyet?—odd I'll mak you rue that. Nae wonder ye ne'er got a man, ye cankerly runt, wi' your red neb and your tinkler tongue."

This was enough. Miss Mizy rose like a tempest; the same moment souse came the unsavoury deluge from the tub, full in her face, to the total wreck and destruction of all the unfinished bravery of mournings which lay scattered around.

CHAPTER III.

THE TASK.

"THE awfu'-like thing," as Miss Mizy ever afterwards spoke of the schoolboys' conspiracy, was attended with the most important consequences. The first result was a formal complaint to Mr Tannyhill, to whom the indignant plaintiff stated her wrongs with an eloquence to which we cannot do justice, demanding the immediate punishment of the offenders.

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y ever afterwards spoke nded with the most im- was a formal complaint ant plaintiff stated her cannot do justice, de- he offenders.

The master's affectionate bosom was deeply afflicted with the account that Miss Mizy gave of "the deevilry," which, in her narrative, certainly suffered no diminution either in the sins of the perpetration, or the cunning with which it had been planned. In his way back to the school, he meditated on the sort of punishment which he ought to inflict, for hitherto the rod had been unknown in his discipline; and he came to the strange conclusion, that, as the end of all punishment ought to be the reformation of the delinquent, he would oblige the culprits in this case to apply with more than ordinary assiduity to their tasks, and require them, for the remainder of the summer, to attend the school two additional hours a-day. Some governors might have thought this a punishment to themselves, but it never occurred to his honest and ingenuous bosom that it was any hardship; on the contrary, he felt it a duty which he was called to perform, in order to correct the effects of the evil spirit which had been so audaciously manifested. Accordingly, when the boys assembled next day, he called the conspirators before him, and made them mount a form in presence of their companions.

"I told you," said he, casting his eyes towards our hero, "that the ill deedy pyet would bring you into baith scaith and scorn; and now ye see my prophecy has come to pass, for there ye stand, five a' in a row, like so many evil-doers as ye surely are, that I ought to make an example of, by letting you fin' the weight o' my hand. But it's no my way to chastise with stripes on the body: no, unless the heart is made to feel, a bite o' the taws in the loof, or on the back, will soon heal. In truth, my bairns, I'm wae for you; for gin ye gang on at this rate, what's to become of you when ye enter the world to mak your bread? Wha, Wheelie, will hae ony regard for you, if ye gie yoursel up to mischief? Others here hae friens that may guide them, but ye hae only your auld feckless grannie, that wi' mickle hard labour has ettled, with a blessed constancy, to breed you up in the fear o' God. O man, it will be a sore return for a' her love and kindness, if ye break her heart at last!—I speak to you mair than to the rest, because in this matter ye are the most to blame, and stand in the greatest peril."

"Weel, weel," cried our hero, half sobbing half angrily, "ye

need nae fash me ony mair about it, but tell me at ance what ye're ga'n to do wi' me."

The master was so astonished at this interruption, that he stepped back, and sat down in his chair for some time silent. The culprits became all pale, and the rest of the boys stood aghast; so daring a defiance, as it seemed to them, of all authority, could not, it was supposed, but be followed by some tremendous display of power.

Mr Tannyhill, however, read Wylie's character in the expression, and by some happy or benevolent interpretation of his petulance, took the only way with him that could be attended with any benefit.—"I will fash you nae mair," said he, addressing him emphatically, "as ye seem to be contrite for your fault; but, in order to try whether ye have the right leaven o' repentance in you, I will task you to a task that will do you good for a' the remainder of your days."

He then ordered him to get the first fifty Psalms by heart, and interdicted him from all play and pastime till he had learned them.

From that moment Andrew applied himself to learn the Psalms, with a perseverance that quite surprised the master, who had hitherto regarded him but as a droll and curious creature. The shortness of the time in which he performed the task was not, however, remarkable; for his memory was not well adapted to literature, but his singular abstraction from all his playfellows, and the earnestness with which he adhered determinately to his task, astonished every one. During the intervals of the school hours, he was seen sitting by himself in the lee of a headstone in the churchyard, muttering verse after verse, from the Psalm-book which he held in his hand.

In this situation Mary Cunningham, the sister of Willy, happened to pass, and seeing him, said, "What are ye doing there, Wheelie?"

He looked up, but, without answering her question, repeated in a loud monotonous voice,—

"My heart inditing is
Good matter in a song."

"O, hae ye no got your Psalms yet!" exclaimed Mary, for

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she had heard from her brother of his particular additional punishment; and, going up close to him, inquired how many he had learned.

"I can say ane-and-forty a' through, Miss Mary, without missing a word."

"What a lee, Wheelie, that is!" said Mary, "naeboddy could ever say so many Psalms straight through."

"Will ye hearken me?" said Andrew; and she took the book, which he at the same time offered, and leaning over the headstone behind him, bade him begin.

"That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray."

he immediately repeated in one unvaried stream of voice,

"But dwelleth in the scorner's chair,
And stands in sinner's way."

"O, Wheelie, Wheelie! ye canna say the first verse o' the vera first Psalm; a pretty like story, that ye hae gotten ane-and-forty by heart!" exclaimed Mary.

Reference was, in consequence, made to the book; and after some farther parley, Andrew resumed, and went on as far as the twelfth Psalm without missing a single word, to the delighted surprise of his fair auditor. For this time, however, it was necessary that he should go to school, and Mary return home; but, before parting, she agreed to visit him again at the same place next day to hear the remainder, and she kept her word.

Again the book was in her hand, and leaning over the tombstone, with Andrew sitting below, she listened with unwearied pleasure to the undeviating and inflexible continuance of his monotonous strain, till he had reached the thirty-first Psalm, when the same causes that occasioned the former interruption again obliged them to separate, after a renewal of the compact.

On the third day, Andrew completed not only the forty-one, but two more that he had learned in the mean time. Mary confessed her admiration of his wonderful genius, and from thenceforth, till he had completed his task, she was his regular visiter.

Out of this circumstance, a greater degree of intimacy arose between them than is usual among boys and girls of their age. She admired him as a prodigy of talent, and he was pleased when he met her, on account of the interest she had taken in his task. From the attack on her aunt, however, he had been prohibited from approaching "The Place," as the Craigland mansion-house was called by the villagers; and as she was educated by Miss Mizy herself, preparatory to being in due time sent to an Edinburgh boarding-school, they had few opportunities of meeting. But on Sunday he always took care to stand in the path by which the laird's family crossed the churchyard, and a smile was as regularly exchanged between them in passing. As often also as the minister read out to be sung any one of the fifty psalms, Mary would peep over the front of the laird's laft, to where Andrew sat beside his grandmother in the area below; and on these occasions she never missed his eye, which seemed to be instinctively turned up in expectation of meeting hers.

In this way, the germ of a mutual affection was implanted, before either was awakened by nature to the sense of love and beauty, or informed by the world of the disparity of their condition. They were themselves unconscious of the tie with which simplicity had innocently linked them together—and being as yet both free from the impulses of passion, they felt not the impediments which birth and fortune had placed between them.

The Craigland family was one of the most ancient in the county; the estate was large, but by the indolence of the laird it was much neglected, and the rental was in consequence small. The woods, however, were valuable, and the old tacks, or leases, were drawing to a close; so that, while in a state of comparative penury, it seemed probable that both Cunningham and his sister would inherit a very ample patrimony. Of this their aunt, Miss Mizy, was fully sensible, and frequently complained to her brother that he should allow his son, with such an inheritance in view, to be brought up among the children of the tenants. But her complaints were long unavailing. The laird had been educated in the same school with the fathers of these children, and he could discover nothing in his sister's remonstrances to

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make him wish to see his son a finer gentleman than himself. "The awfu'-like thing," however, had a more impressive effect than her lectures. It was an exploit of mischief far surpassing all the easy pranks of his soft youth; and upon the minister, at Miss Mizy's instigation, representing to him the disgrace and dishonour that would ensue to the family if the heir was long permitted to associate with such unmeet playmates as the boys of Mr Tannyhill's school, he consented that Willy should be sent from home, and placed at an academy suitable to his rank and prospects. This was accordingly done, and like other boys that drop away from among their school-fellows, Cunningham was soon forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAIR.

AFTER Cunningham was removed from Mr Tannyhill's school, a considerable change took place among our hero's playmates. The fraternity to which the two boys belonged was, in fact, in the course of that summer, broken up, and, for some time, Andrew was without any particular companion. These temporary intermissions of friendship are, however, common to men as well as boys; but the cares of our riper years make us less sensible of the blank left by the removal of a neighbour, than the loss we suffered when a school-fellow was taken away.

The nickname of *Wheelie*, in consequence of this change, was gradually forgotten, or rather ceased to be any longer in use; while the stripling himself seemed daily in quest of something that he could not find, either on the moorlands or along the hedge-rows and the belts of planting that skirted the hills and farms of the Craighlands. He was, as his grandmother said, for some time "like a tynt creature," and for lack of other company, often, on the road-side, fell into discourse with travelling tinklers, blue-gowns, or old soldiers, who had acquired a sufficient

stock of wounds and scars to set them up in beggary. Poor Andrew, however, had nothing to give them; but, nevertheless, it was remarked that they always left him seemingly better pleased than they ever quitted the laird's yett, even when Miss Mizy, after the term-day, allowed an extra neaveful to their wonted weekly almous.

In the evenings, Andrew had recourse to the firesides of the gash and knacky carles and carlins of the village. Still, even in their queerest stories he found a deficiency, for he had no friend of his own age to share his remarks afterwards.

About Hallowe'en, however, this want was supplied. At the distance of a mile from Stoneyholm lay the small estate of Woodside, a mailing, as it was called, with a house somewhat better than the common farm-steadings. The proprietor happened to die, and the lands were rented by his heirs to a neighbouring farmer: the house and garden being in consequence to let, were taken by a Mrs Pierston, the widow of a Glasgow merchant, who, at the Martinmas term, took possession.

This matron had but one child, a fine smart rattling boy of the name of Charles; who was sent to the master's school, where he and Andrew soon became inseparable. The distance of his mother's house from the village occasioned him, as is usual in such circumstances, to bring his dinner in his pocket at first; he was afterwards allowed to dine with Andrew—an arrangement of some advantage to old Martha; for Mrs Pierston was in good circumstances, and indulgent to her only son. Thus commenced one of those attachments which are formed but at school, and are generally supposed to weather the changes of fortune, and the blasts of adversity, better than the friendships of more considerate years.

The buoyancy of Pierston's spirits gave him a seeming ascendancy over Wylie; but it was soon observed by the neighbours, that, in reality, Andrew was the master, and that, by submitting to the pranks and whims of Charles in small affairs, he uniformly obtained the management of things of greater moment, if such language may be applied to the disinterested concerns of school-boys. Pierston had also, as it might have been supposed from its early effects, another advantage over his rustic com-

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panion. He had spent his boyhood in Glasgow, and had been several years at the grammar-school of that city, before his mother removed to the Woodside house. He was in consequence pretty well, for his time, accomplished in many tricks. He stood much less in awe of the municipal dignitaries of the neighbouring towns; and accordingly, at the different fairs, to which he constantly induced Andrew to accompany him, he not only kept his part better among the town boys, but even went further than most of them in the frolics customary on such occasions. But although it was said of Charles that he was a perfect devil's limb, he had a generous warmth of heart, and a lively good humour, that bespoke a favourable interpretation to his worst and wildest stratagems.—Many an old apple-woman at the fairs, however, on seeing the gowk and the titling approach, (as the two boys were called,) watched their tempting piles of toys and delectables with gleg een, and staff grasped to repel some pawkie aggression; while, at the same time, the boys were always merrily welcomed, for Charles had plenty of pocket-money, and spent it freely.

If, in those excursions to the fairs, Pierston found fun and frolic, Andrew reaped some experience of the world. He soon saw that the money his companion spent was sufficient to set up any old woman with a stand; and the thought occurred to him, that if he could get Charles, on the next fair day, to give his money to Janet Pirn, a sly and droll old lame widow, with whose tales and ballads they had been often entertained during the winter, they might be able to pay Janet a shilling for her trouble, and make a great deal of money by the speculation. The idea was most delightful; but Charles justly dreaded that if the existence of the copartnership should become known to the other boys, especially to those belonging to the towns, the consequences would be ruinous, as Janet would assuredly be plundered without mercy. This consideration, however, was soon got over, by Andrew saying, that if they kept their own secret, it could never be known.

Terms were accordingly proposed to Janet, who readily acceded to them; and when the Kilwinning fair-day came round, she made her appearance at the corner of the bridge,

seated in an arm-chair, dressed in her red cloak and black Sunday bonnet, with a table before her, covered with a cloth secretly borrowed by Charles from his mother's napery-chest, and temptingly adorned with a competent stock of the requisite allurements. The boys themselves had accompanied Janet into Irvine to buy them, and they also assisted her to set them out to the best advantage. The muscalmonds were declared to be as big as doos' eggs—the sweeties and corianders were of all sizes and colours, intermingled with the smallest and fairest Mistress Nanse—the rock of Gibraltar was laid forth, with all its best veins particularly turned towards the view—parliament-cakes, and gingerbread watches, richly gilded—piles of raisins and of figs—gems of sugar-candy—and amber lumps of barley-sugar—constituted this garden of Hesperides, round which a formidable array of idolatries of all descriptions, from ogres with a curran in the forehead instead of an eye, to game-cocks with bits of cinnamon for spurs, were exhibited to the greatest advantage. Such another stand was not in the whole fair. Janet had a great run; and the two boys, each with a stick in his hand, stood sentinels at the ends of the table. All went on for some time in the most prosperous way. Andrew counted the gains that were flowing in, and Charles enticed customers by the bravado of his eulogium on the articles for sale. But this display of goods, and of the interest which the gowk and the titling had in the concern, excited the envy and jealousy of their less successful competitors; and when, about noon, Janet and another carlin adjourned to one of the public-houses to get a bottle of ale to their dinner of bread and cheese, the secret was divulged that she was but an agent and a hireling. We shall not attempt to describe the speed with which the story spread, nor the indignation of all the rival sweetie-wives. The juvenile customers, who had dealt with Janet merely because her sweets were the best at the fair, thought themselves cheated, and opened an incessant fire of the small shot of pips, while a tremendous battery of twenty mouths, every now and then, roared from the adjacent stands. Andrew advised Janet to pack up her things quietly, but Charles insisted she should not budge a step; they had as good a right to sell things at the fair as any other body, and he

was prepared to defend it. The attack continued—the crowd gathered—Charles lost his temper, and struck a great heavy lumbering country lout that was laughing at him, over the fingers. The fellow retaliated. Some of the spectators took part with Charles—a battle-royal ensued, in the midst of which the table was overset, and all its treasures trodden in the mire, amidst the acclamations and the clapping of hands of all the rival dealers.

The two boys seeing their golden dream thus dissipated, retired from the scene, and left those who had been involved in their cause to fight the battle out. But they did not retire to bewail their misfortune—they were more heroic. Charles saw, and indeed felt, that he was no match for the country lad who had thrashed him, but his ire did not burn the less fiercely. On the contrary, he went with Andrew in quest of some of their school-fellows, to assist in revenging the wrong which he had himself provoked.

CHAPTER V.

COMMON SENSE.

WHEN the two boys had walked up the street, and passed through the gate of the masons' lodge into the churchyard, without meeting with any of their companions, Andrew halted and said, "Od, Charlie, I'm thinking we had as weel bide as we are—yon's a horned stot, in comparison to us, wha hae but banes o' grisle—and a solid chap o' his neive would be as deadly as Coomy the smith's forehammer—Od, I'm no for meddling ony mair wi' the muckle brute."

Pierston reprobated the pusillanimity of this prudent sentiment, and became more and more resolute for revenge.

"Vera weel," cried Wylie, "tak your ain gait, and get your e'en steekit and your nose smash'd, and see what ye'll mak o't—a pretty pirlit ye'll be; me leading you hame, blind and bleeding, wi' a napkin or an auld stocking tied round your head. Eh!

what a skreighing at the sight o' you, Charlie, there will be!—your mother running out and in, clapping her hands for her murder't bairn."

"I dinna care though he were to kill me!" exclaimed Charles, "if I had but my will o' him beforehand."

"Ay, that's sense," said Andrew, "gin ye could but get your will o' him first; but the fear is, that he may get the will o' us—and what's to be done then?"

Pierston was a little puzzled with this, and hesitating, said, after a moment's reflection—"We might watch for him, and stane him frae behind the dyke, when he's gaun hame in the gloaming."

"It's a cowardly thing to waylay a defenceless man—Od, Charlie, I thought ye had mair spunk!" replied Andrew, in perfect sincerity, but still only anxious to pacify the resentment of his friend. Touch my honour touch my life, was a sentiment that Pierston had learned among the youths of his own kidney at the grammar-school of Glasgow; and the implied unworthiness of taking his enemy unprepared, affected him in his most vulnerable feelings.

"What am I to do, Andrew? It's a dreadful thing to gi'e up my satisfaction. Look at my lug whar the brute struck me—it's birzed black and blue—deevil's in him, but I'll gar him rue't."

Andrew examined the wounded part, and declared it was just a flea-bite. "It's a wee red," said he, "and before half an hour's by ye'll ne'er fin't. Man, Charlie, it's bairnly to mak sic a wark for a bit tig on the haffet—a' ye gottin's no the tae half o' what ye gied—for ye're a deevil at a paik, when your blises are up—I would na come in your reverence then for something."

Pierston was flattered by the compliment to his strength and valour; his pride was also touched at the idea of exaggerating the effects of the blow he had received, which Andrew, in fact, adroitly undervalued, and he said, "As for the thump on the side o' the head, I hae thole't twenty times mair before noo; and I think I would be content if I was sure he had gotten as muckle 'rae me."

"Ye need hae na doubt o' that, Charlie, for he got twa for

ane—ye ken, ye were the first aggressor, ye struck him first wi' the stick, and he gied you but a gentle slaik wi's paw—I dinna think he was very wud for a' that—and then ye birl'd at him. Od! but ye're a terrier when in a passion, Charlie—and when a's considered, I think we ought to be thankfu' that we came off wi' hale banes, and nae blood spilt."

"But the stan' was coupit, and a' our merchandize lost—wha's to mak up that?" replied Pierston, fairly at a loss for a sufficient reason to nurse his rage any longer.

"I hae had my thoughts o' that too," said our hero, "and I jealousy that it was nae a right thing o' us to be marrows in any sic trade wi' cripple Janet. It was interloping wi' the auld sweetie-wives—ye saw what a stoor raise amang them when the truth came out—there were nae ither callants at the fair keeping stands."

"That's weel frae you, Andrew," said Charles, "for it was a' your own doing—I didna care a bawbee for the stand, and a' the profit."

"I'll mak nae denial," was Wylie's discreet answer; "for I kent nae better; but I hae got insight by the upshot, and I wish the whole story were weel hidden; for gin that lassie Mary Cunningham hears that we were keeping a stand, like twa sweetie-wives at the fair, she'll herry my seven senses wi' her jeering—a' ye hae gotten will be naething to what I maun thole, so let's keep a calm sough and close tongues."

Charles was now fully persuaded, not only of the propriety of stifling his revenge, but also convinced that they had not been engaged in any very honourable adventure; and said, with some degree of mortification and chagrin, "I hope Janet has ta'en care o' the table-cloth, for sic a rippit there will be about it if it's lost!"

Andrew, perceiving that he had gained a complete victory, proposed that they should return to cripple Janet; and they found her replacing the stand with such of the articles as she had been able to pick up, selling the damaged at great bargains to the children, who, hovering round her, deplored the wreck of such delicious commodities. The moment, however, that the gowk and the titling were again seen on the spot, the auld

wives around immediately broke out on them a second time; and such had been the effect of Andrew's representation of the unworthy nature of their copartnery, that Charles was quite daunted by their banter, and slunk away. Our hero, however, was none dismayed; but with great address turned the scale in their favour, by telling Janet that he and Charles gave up to her all the merchandize and profit, on condition that she took good care of the table-cloth. Never was generosity better timed, —the gift was a little fortune to old Janet, and she so loudly expressed her thanks and gratitude, that the other women, to whom the boys had been good customers on other occasions, joined instantly in praising them to the skies, and long before the evening, the gowk and the titling were in as high favour as ever.

But the consequences of this adventure did not stop here. It reached the ears of Mrs Pierston, who had, indeed, previously begun to suspect that the school at Stoneyholm was not exactly the fittest place for a boy of her son's prospects; and Charles was soon after removed, and sent to complete his education in one of the neighbouring towns, where he continued till he was summoned to London by an uncle, a great city merchant. A second time Andrew was thus again left to himself; but the friendship between him and Charles was not entirely broken by their separation. For at the vacation and holidays, Pierston regularly visited his mother at the Woodside-House, and his intimacy with Andrew was, on those occasions, as uniformly renewed. The difference of the spheres in which they moved was, however, gradually operating a change on the characters of both. Charles, destined for the mercantile profession, and amidst genteel companions, educated in the hopes and prospects of opulence, was every year developing more and more into a spruce and tonish gallant; while Andrew, bred up in rustic poverty, and without any definite views as to his future life, settled into a little gash carlie, remarkable chiefly for a straightforward simplicity. His drollery and good humour, however, rendered him a familiar and prodigious favourite with every body; and although few in the parish were, perhaps, more destitute of any visible means of rising in the world, a confident belief was

entertained among all who knew him, that he was destined to become a rich man—a great one none ever ventured to anticipate; nothing indeed could be more opposite to any idea of personal grandeur, than his small, short, round-headed figure, smooth apple-cheeks, and little twinkling eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSULTATION.

At the period of which we are now treating, neither the commerce nor manufactures of Scotland had risen to that height which has since wrought such changes, not only in the appearance of the country, but affecting the very depths and principles of the national character.

The youth having few means of advancement, and but a narrow field of enterprise at home, sought their fortunes abroad; and good schooling, as it was called, constituted the common patrimony of the Scottish adventurer. As Andrew was rendered unfit by his feeble frame for the drudgery of a farmer, his grandmother, actuated in her humble sphere by the national spirit, resolved to spare no cost on his education. But whether to breed him for a divine, a doctor, or a lawyer, was a point not easily determined. It presented even more difficulties to her imagination than any apprehension which she entertained of procuring the means; for with respect to the latter, her trust in the care of Providence was unbounded; and she had heard of many gospel ministers, come of no better stock, who bravely upheld the banner of the testimony, even unto the death. She had also heard of doctors who had returned nabobs from India, that began as shop-boys to druggists; and of lawyers on the freehold-roll of the county, that had commenced their career by running errands for town-officers.

But as she could not determine for herself, she resolved to consult the master. Accordingly, one afternoon, when the school

had been dismissed, she went to his house, and found him at his tea, listening, with a faint smile that played among his features like sunshine through the hedgerow, to some little comic occurrence in the village which Andrew was describing, while sitting at his side as a companion, but not at that time a participating guest.

The small room where they were seated was in the back part of the school-house. Behind the door, in a recess, stood a humble bed, covered with a patched and quilted coverlet, which at night was carefully removed, being only used for show by day. Fronting the entrance, a mahogany scrutoire was placed, somewhat of an incongruous degree of splendour, compared with the general style of the apartment, and over it hung a Dutch looking-glass, in a gaudy frame of flowers and gilding, a considerable margin of the plate being adorned with birds and foliage painted on the surface. The top of the scrutoire, under the glass, was covered with a damask towel, and occupied by several volumes neatly bound, a tall wine goblet, with a white spiral line up the stalk, filled with flowers, and a mahogany tea-chest, with an inlaid likeness of a clam-shell in front. The window was between the scrutoire and the wall facing the bed. It consisted of four panes, and looked into a small garden, rank with apple-ringing, and other fragrant herbs and stately flowers. The sole of the window was occupied with a flower-pot containing a geranium, round which several books lay scattered, a shaving-box, a razor-case, and a hone. Opposite to the window, and near the door, stood an eight-day clock, with a black bust between the volutes on the top, bearing the well-known inscription of the cloud-capt towers, indicating that the image was meant for Shakspeare. Between the clock and the corner, Andrew and the master were sitting when his grandmother entered, and she was in consequence requested to take a seat in an angular elbow-chair, which occupied the corner opposite to them.

"I'm come," said Martha, "to hae a crack wi' you about this get. It's time noo that he were thinking o' doing something for himsel'. He's weel through his fifteen, and I would fain hae an inkling gin he be o' any capacity "

Mr Tannyhill, foreseeing that the conversation would turn on particulars, which might be as well discussed in Andrew's absence, suggested that it would be proper for him to retire.

"Ay," said his grandmother, "tak the door on your back, and play yourself till me and the maister hae come to an understanding."

Our hero on this hint immediately withdrew; but although he took the door on his back by shutting it after him, he placed himself close to it in the kitchen, from which the room entered, and overheard all that passed within.

"Poor laddie," resumed Martha, when he had retired, "he's no strong; hard wark's no for him, and saft's ill to get. Noo, Mr Tannyhill, what's your conceit? I doubt he has nae got the cast o' grace needful to a gospel-minister. James Sinney, the droggest in Kilwinning, would tak him for a word o' my mouth, if ye thought he's o' a physical turn; and John Gledd, the messenger, wha was sib to his mother, ance promised as muckle; but I canna say I hae ony broo o' the law, for it's a deadly distemper amang friens; and Andra, though baith pawkie and slee, is a warm-hearted creature, and would be o'er scrimp in the severities of justice, especially in pleas amang kith and kin."

The master replied, that, of all the learned professions, he really thought Wheelie was best disposed by nature for the law; "for although," said he, "the crow thinks its ain bird the whitest, ye're no, Martha, sae misled by your affection, as to imagine that Andrew's qualified to make a soun' frae the pulpit; and noo-a-days, even if he were, a' things o' religion hae settled into a method, that gies the patronless preacher but little chance o' a kirk. Wi' your oye's ordinar looks, I fear, though he were to grow as learned as Matthew Henry himsel', he would hae but a cauld coal to blaw at."

"For the bairn's looks, Mr Tannyhill, I think they're weel enough. There may be brawer, but a hantle are far waur," said Martha, a little tartly; "howsomever, if it's your notion that he wouldna make a sincere divine, I would rather see him gaun about the farms wi' Thomas Steek, the tailor, clouting at saxpence a-day, than walking the dyke-sides between hope and

starvation, wi' a thin white face, and his forefinger atween the leaves o' some auld kittle Latin buke."

"Your description o' a luckless probationer," said the master with a sigh, "is ower true. It's a state without pleasure to the man himsel', and a sorrow to a' that see him. I would be wae to think that Andrew's blithe spirit was quenched wi' the tear of mortification; and therefore, Martha, if ye would follow my advice, a' I can say is, let him choose between Mr Sinney and John Gledd.

"I jealouse, sir," replied Martha, "that he has but a sma stomach for the drog trade, and I fancy he'll tak to the law."

"In that," said Mr Tannyhill, "I doubt not, wi' a portion of perseverance, he may grow a topping character. I hae seen at Edinburgh, when I was at the College, advocates proudly before the Courts, that could reckon no higher parentage. He has only to join care to industry, and, by a decent use o' the means that Providence may place in his power, I have no doubt he'll reap both riches and honour."

While Martha was thus drawing out, in the pursuit of her object, the latent and slumbering mind of the master, our hero was listening with a throbbing heart. At the mention of the ministry, a dim vision floated before him, in which the fair form of Mary Cunningham was blended with the interior of a church, and the remembrance of fifty psalms. It was, however, but the passionless association of feelings and recollections that dissolved away, and was lost in disagreeable images of the green and yellow gallipots, sores and salves, odious stuffs and bottled reptiles, with which the name of James Sinney, the druggist, was associated. The chances, by prudence and industry, of attaining riches and honours through the legal profession, determined his choice; and he put an end to the consultation by opening the door, and looking in, at the same time saying, "I'm for John Gledd's, grannie."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OUTFIT.

THERE are few things in the world more wonderful to philosophy than the means by which the honest poor of Scotland are enabled, from day to day, with light hearts, strong arms, and brave spirits, to face the ills of life with what they call "sma' families"—that is, at least half-a-dozen children. But their general condition is comparative opulence to what was the lot of old Martha Docken; and yet she was one of a class that would have spurned the gifts of charity—of that class to whom the country still points with pride, and we hope long will, in spite of all the improvements in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

As soon as it was determined that Andrew should be sent to John Gledd's, the writer, to learn the law, various important considerations required to be well weighed by his grandmother. In the first place, John lived in Kilwinning, a town three miles at least from Stoneyholm; and in the second, according to custom, it was requisite that Andrew, as a lawyer's clerk, should be a little better dressed than formerly; although Martha assured him that the ragged coat o' the callant was ne'er a mot in the man's marriage.

In a long prospective contemplation of the era which had now arrived, Martha had carefully preserved the Sunday clothes of his father; but in order to fit him, they required considerable alterations, and a consultation was held with Thomas Steek, the tailor, on the subject, the result of which was, that on a day set for the purpose, Thomas, with his laddie, Clipping Jock, arrived betimes at Martha's cottage-door, with all the requisite implements of their profession. The tailor himself, being a lamiter, with a drawn-up leg, and using a stilt, carried the shears in his left hand; and Jock, a little hump-backed creature, brought the goose behind him, bearing the law-board over his shoulder. By their art and contrivance, Andrew was properly equipped to take his place at John Gledd's desk—John having, on the first appli-

cation, immediately agreed to lighten Martha's hand of the boy; for however strict in the harsh offices of caption and horning, he had the friendly spirit of the poor man among the poor, and was ever ready, to the utmost stretch of his narrow means, to help a neighbour in need.

The day fixed for our hero to enter the world by the clachan of Kilwinning, was the first Monday of May. On the Sunday before, he made his appearance at church in his new garb.

As the young bird lingers about the nest, and is timid and reluctant to trust its untried wing, the fancy of the schoolboy, when he is on the point of first leaving home, hovers amidst the scenes of his childhood, and wistfully looks back on a thousand little objects which, till then, he had never thought were dear to him. In the calm still evening of that Sabbath, this sentiment pervaded the bosom of our youthful adventurer, insomuch that, when the master invited him, as a testimony of his regard, to take tea with him, he declined it, saying, "I am vera mickle obliged, sir; but I'm thinking o' just taking a dauner round the Craigland parks."

The good and simple Tannyhill was so deeply sensible of the feeling which dictated this refusal, that he said nothing, but followed Andrew with his eye, as he saw him moving away towards the fields. "That laddie," said he, to one of the neighbours who happened at the time to come up, "has mair in him than we gie him credit for. I wouldna be surprised to hear of him being something yet."

Andrew, after parting from the master, strayed into the Craigland plantations, and kept his course along a path that ran beneath the south side of the garden wall attached to the mansion-house, until he had entered the ancient policy of the domain.

Every thing about the Craiglands betokened the disposition of the laird. The house was large, and built at different times. About eighty years before, an addition had been made, in such a manner as to convert the end of the original mansion, or fortalice, into the principal front; by which a fine old avenue of plane-trees was thrown, as it were, aside, and another approach was formed towards the new front, which looked into what, in

the improver's time, had been an inclosed parterre, or flower-garden—a low hewn-stone wall, with square columns at intervals, surrounding the same; in the front of which, and at each side, was a gateway, formed by stately square pillars, crowned with sculptured pine-apples. The plan and architecture, though in a formal, were certainly in something of a grand style, if not in a good taste; but all was in a state of ruinous neglect—the parterre was overgrown with weeds—vast bunches of nettles and docks filled the corners, and rose above the inclosing wall—the pine-apple heads of several of the pillars lay among them as they had fallen—and washing-tubs, and coals, and peats, were piled against the house, under the very windows of the dining-room. But if the mansion and grounds were neglected, the woods suffered little from sharing the same carelessness. The trees, left to themselves, had grown into every possible shape of picturesque luxuriance; and fortunately both for the admirer of the spot and the heir, the laird would not suffer them to be touched, and, in consequence, the Craigland groves were among the most beautiful in the west of Scotland.

As Andrew sauntered alone into the checkered gloom of those old avenues, the hopes of his young imagination, in some degree, partook of the sober colouring that was settling on the distant vista of the landscape beyond, as the evening twilight gradually faded. He was still, it is true, a mere boy, but he was entering on that epoch of life when all the affectionate feelings of the bosom begin to concentrate into passion; and for some time, by the gradual removal of his school-fellows, he had been, in a manner, left alone in the village—a situation calculated to nourish his sensibility for the beauties of nature.

At the bottom of the avenue ran a small stream, over which in the gayer days of the Craiglands, a wooden bridge had been thrown; but it was long destroyed, and a plank supplied its place. On this plank Andrew seated himself, and for some time, in idleness, continued turning the pebbles with his toe in the channel. Mary Cunningham, who was out walking with one of the maids, happened, in returning home, to see him; and stepping softly up behind him, covered his eyes suddenly with her hands—"It's you, Mary!" cried he instinctively; and the

fively girl, unclosing his eyes, began to laugh and jeer at his new appearance. "You may tak your fill o't the night, Mary," said he, "but it winna be lang ye'll hae't in your power."

"Eh!" cried Mary, seriously, "whar are ye gaun?"

"I'm boun' the morn's morning to John Gledd's, in Kilwinning."

"And what are ye to do there, Wheelie?"

"I'm thinking o' making a forton."

By this time the maid had joined them, and she interposed laughingly, saying, "And when he's a grand man, he'll come and marry you, Miss Mary."

"Oh, that will be sic a while!" said Mary.

What more might have ensued, we cannot presume to conjecture; but the conversation was interrupted by the shrill voice of Miss Mizy, heard echoing from within the garden, "Mary Cunningham, whar are ye? Come into the house, and tak your book immedietly;" at the sound of which Mary skipped away, followed by the maid; and Andrew, rising from the bridge, returned home to his grandmother's cottage.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHANGES.

Soon after this little incident, a lease of one of the Craigland farms fell in; and the augmentation which the laird received in the rent at the renewal, fully justified his sister, Miss Mizy, to urge him to send Mary, as he had originally designed, to an Edinburgh boarding-school, to learn genteel manners, and how to sew satin-pieces and play on the spinnet—the indispensable accomplishments at that period of an Ayrshire laird's daughter, and we do not know that any essential improvement has been made in the order of their education since.

By this arrangement, Andrew, during his apprenticeship with the messenger, saw Mary no more. Meanwhile, his assiduity

at the desk was quite exemplary, as well as the determination with which he was actuated to acquire a knowledge of his profession—if knowledge it might be called of the law, which consisted merely in being able to copy with fidelity that circuitous and perplexing verbosity, which is professedly intended to be clearer and plainer than the language of common sense. He was also distinguished from all the lads of his own age, for the preference which he gave to the knacky conversation of old and original characters. It signified not to him, whether the parties, with whom he enjoyed his leisure, were deemed douce or daft; it was enough that their talk was cast in queer phrases, and their minds ran among the odds and ends of things. By this peculiar humour, he was preserved in his clachan simplicity; while he made, as he often afterwards said himself, "his memory, like a wisdom-pock, a fouth of auld knick-knacketies—clues of experience, and shapings of matter, that might serve to clout the rents in the knees and elbows o' straits and difficulties."

An event, however, happened, which changed the prospects of his professional career. John Gledd had a shock of the palsy, and was obliged to give up his business, by which Andrew was thrown on the world. He had, however, begun to acquire some confidence in himself; and this event did not so much depress him on his own account, as on that of his master. He had also by this time some suspicion that Kilwinning was not exactly the best place for becoming that grand man he was determined to be.

The illness of John Gledd, therefore, decided his fate and fortune. At first it was proposed, as he had got the pen of a ready writer, that he should try to obtain a place in the clerk's chamber of Irvine or Ayr, from which, like others of the legal fry, he might in time migrate to Edinburgh for a season, and then come back to Kilwinning, and endeavour to gather custom among the clients of his old master. But, after much deliberation, it was agreed between him and his grandmother that he should "try his luck in London, that great city."

This apparently singular and bold resolution occurred to Martha, from the great good fortune that had attended a niece of her own who was settled there. The young woman had gone to the metropolis as a servant with the Eaglesham family, and

had the good-luck to attract the affections of Mr Ipsey, an old solicitor of high reputation and great connexions, and who, finding he could not obtain her love on easier terms, had the good sense to make her his wife. Between Martha and her kinswoman no literary correspondence subsisted; but from time to time they heard of each other, and the old woman rejoiced at the prosperity of her niece, but without thinking, till John Gledt's misfortune, that it would ever be of any avail to her grandson. That event, however, directed her eyes towards Mr Ipsey, and it was determined to solicit her influence with her husband on our hero's behalf. A letter was accordingly written by Andrew to that effect; and, by return of the post, a kind and considerate reply was received, honourable alike to Mrs Ipsey's spirit as a Scotchwoman, and to her husband's generosity as an Englishman. She informed Martha that Mr Ipsey had retired from business several years; but that his successor, Mr Vellum, would receive Andrew, whenever it was convenient for him to come to London; and that, as his outfit would probably cost more than her aunt could well afford, she inclosed a bill for twenty pounds, not as a gift, but as a loan, to be repaid by Andrew whenever he could do so.

The receipt of this friendly and considerate letter was an auspicious omen, that every one in Stoneyholm regarded as a sure token of something grand in the future fortunes of Andrew; and to none did it give more pleasure than to the master, whom our hero himself was the first to inform of his great good-luck.

"I'm glad to hear it, Wheelie," said the kind and good Tannyhill; "but neither in this, nor in any thing else, be either overly lifted up, or cast down. Take some honest and honourable purpose in your mind, and make all your endeavours bend to the attainment thereof, by that ye'll not only get forward in life, but your steps will be steady and respected, though your passaging be slow. But, my bairn, set not your thought on riches as an end, but only as a means, for something more solid to yoursel', and pleasing in the sight of Him, who, in this favour, has given you erlis of the servitude he claims from you—the which is to be kindly and generous, but neither to be inconsiderate nor lavish."

Andrew was fully sensible of the force of this advice; and perhaps he was the more impressed with its practicable wisdom, inasmuch, as it was in unison with the natural and habitual course of his own reflections. For although he was not a Sir Isaac Newton, to reason in his boyhood about any thing so well, as that philosopher's meditations on the cause which occasioned the fall of an apple, he was nevertheless, in his way, endowed with a peculiar genius, and had formed, even at this early period, a scheme of life and conduct, in which he was resolved to persevere.

CHAPTER IX.

PREPARATIONS.

In some respects, the parish of Stoneyholm was, at the period of Andrew's departure, not so fortunate in its pastor as its neighbour Dalmailing, of which the meek and pious Mr Balwhidder was then the incumbent; nor could it even be compared with the well-watered vineyard of Garnock, where the much-celebrated Doctor Zachariah Pringle had, some years before, been appointed helper and successor. For the reverend Doctor Dozadeal was a town-bred clergyman; and having been a tutor in the family of an Edinburgh advocate, had of course more genteel manners, and less warmth of heart, than is usually found among the genuine presbyters of the Scottish church.

In his address he was dry and grave, and measured out his sentences as apothegms of impressive wisdom. He preferred the formal dinners of the heritors to the sick-beds of the lowlier members of his flock. This was natural; but he also studied, it was alleged, a little too earnestly, the advancement of his interests in this world; and it was understood that he had only accepted the cure of the parish, in the hope, and under the promise, of one more suited to his habits. He took no pains to ingratiate himself with his parishioners—he knew few of them

by name, and they seldom troubled him with their little cares and anxieties; the tempering of which, by advice and consolation, is perhaps the best, as it is the most amiable, of all a pastor's duties. His deportment and manners were, however, spotless and irreproachable; and the habitual respect with which the Scottish peasantry regard their ministers, secured him all the external deference that is commonly paid by the people, to a character which religion, tradition, and patriotism, have hallowed to the national affections.

To a being constituted with the peculiar humours of our hero, such a man as Doctor Dozadeal could not fail to appear in the most unfavourable light. The whole of the framed and set up manners which the doctor had assumed, as particularly dignified, were disagreeable to Andrew; and his shrewdness detected, beneath the solemn cloak of his consequentiality, a character which, on account of its own endowments and merits, was really entitled to no extraordinary respect. Instead, therefore, of being impressed with those sentiments of awe and admiration, which the doctor constantly, on all occasions, endeavoured to inspire, and which, from a few of the parishioners, he certainly sometimes obtained, Andrew was in the practice, even before he went to John Gledde's, of mocking his pomposity; and this irreverent disposition was none weakened at the time when the preparations were making for his departure for London. His grandmother, however, deemed it necessary that he should pay the doctor a formal visit prior to his departure, in order to receive his advice, according to a good old custom that had prevailed from time immemorial; and which will ever be preserved while the intercourse between the minister and his parishioners is maintained on true Christian and presbyterian principles. The doctor himself would, perhaps, have been as willing as our hero to have dispensed with the performance of this ancient homage, at least if we may judge by the result.

Andrew crept slowly and reluctantly to the manse door, and on asking for the minister, was shown into the parlour, where the doctor was sitting at a table, slumbering in his elbow-chair. A new book, with a few of the early leaves cut, lay before him;

and an ivory folder, which had dropped from his hand, was lying on the floor at his foot.

His age might be near fifty: in his person he was inclined to corpulency; and there was a certain degree of sallow lethargy in the cast and complexion of his features, the effect of habitual, rather than of constitutional, indolence.

Like most country clergymen in the forenoon, he was slovenly dressed. His breeches' knees were only half-buttoned, his stockings ill drawn up, his shoes unfastened and down in the heel, his neckcloth lax and dirty, and his whole appearance betokening a man little liable to be disturbed by visitors.

Andrew, on entering the room, made a bob with his head for a bow, and stood for about a minute swinging his hat in his hand, and looking round the walls and towards the ceiling, casting a momentary glance towards the doctor, who, roused by his entrance, seemed to wait in expectation of some communication; seeing, however, that Andrew was not inclined to speak, the doctor said, "Well, Andrew, what is your business with me?"

"My grannie sent me to tell you, sir, that I'm gaun to London to learn the law there"—was the reply, uttered at, but not to, the doctor; for by this time his eyes had settled on the dial-plate of the minister's watch, which hung over the mantelpiece.

"And when do you go?" inquired the doctor.

"As soon as my grannie can get my bit pack o' duds ready," said Andrew, in the same careless and awkward manner. The doctor then requested him to sit down, and Andrew seated himself on the chair nearest the door.

"I hope," said the minister, "you will do your endeavour to give satisfaction to your employers."

"An I dinna do that, what will come o' me?" was the answer.

"You must study to acquire respectful manners, and to behave properly towards your superiors." Andrew made no reply to this; but raising his eyes, which, on taking his seat, he had cast downward, he looked for a moment at the doctor, who continued, "for you must have often heard it remarked, that a man's manners commonly make his fortune."

"Atweel I should ken that," said Andrew, in the most indifferent manner; "for it was aye the first copy-line that the maister set, when he put us in sma' write."

The doctor's countenance was a little troubled by this reply, not only on account of the words, but the manner in which it was said; and he resumed with an accent somewhat approaching to severity—

"I have heard that you have good friends to take you by the hand in London, and it is well you are so fortunate; for I doubt, young man, you will need all their assistance."

The cheeks of Andrew flushed for a moment at this observation, and he again darted a glance from under his brows towards the doctor, who continued speaking, his voice gradually rising into the tone of a lecture.

"Hitherto you have been but on the threshold of the world, and you have experienced none of its difficulties; you will find now that mankind are, in general, an unfriendly race, and that in London they are very different from your rustic friends here in Stoneyholm. There the successful look proudly down on the poor, bestriding the path, to prevent new candidates from sharing with them the vantage ground of fortune."

"Gin they'll no let me by, I maun try to run through aneath their legs," said Andrew, interrupting the oration with a sly indifference, which effectually disconcerted the reverend doctor, who, taking up the book from the table, said, in a tone equivalent to a dismissal, "I wish you, young man, all manner of success, and that the blessing of heaven may prosper your undertakings."

"I'm very mickle obliged to you," replied Andrew drily; and opening the door at the same time, bobbed his head as carelessly as when he entered, and immediately retired.

"What did the minister say to you?" enquired Martha, when Andrew went home a little sulkily.

"I fancy he gied me his benison," said Andrew. "But I'm thinking he's no that weel versed in the folk o' London, mair than mysel'; for he would hae gart me trow that they hae horns on their head to dish the like o' me, and hooves to tread upon us when doon. For a' that, I'm no fear't."

During the short remainder of the time he spent at Stoneyholm, he seemed, as the period of his departure drew near, to attach himself more and more to the different gaffers and goodies of the village, and to enjoy their peculiarities with a keener relish than ever. His little attentions, in this respect, gave a degree of eclat to the event of his removal, which could hardly have been expected to attend the transit of one so young and so slenderly connected in the parish. On the evening immediately before he set out on his journey, a number of the farmer lads who had been at the master's school with him, came in to the clachan to bid him farewell, and a little dance was, in consequence, struck up in Saunders Chappin's public. With the friendliness and the good-humour of the party he was evidently much delighted; but an old man, who happened to look in upon the ploy, said, "that Wheelie took it a' as ane of some degree"—a remark which was afterwards remembered, much to the credit of the sagacious observer, and which, although there could be as yet no particular change in Andrew's demeanour, would imply that he felt himself no longer belonging to the same class as his youthful associates. It is for philosophers, however, to assign the proper source of that which the village sage so early discovered as an omen of success.

CHAPTER X.

DEPARTURE.

IN the morning on which our hero was to bid a long adieu to his native village, he was awake and stirring with the lark. It was the eye of summer, and the weather was clear and beautiful. The smoke rose from his grandmother's chimney as straight as a column, and stood over it like a high-spreading tree, long before the symptoms of housewifery appeared in any other cottage in the hamlet; for the Glasgow carrier was to pass at sunrise, and Andrew was requested to be in readiness by that

time to go with him. When the carrier stopped to call him, he came instantly out alone, with his box on his shoulder, and the door was immediately closed behind; no one saw Martha till long after he was out of sight. The master, who was abroad to convoy him a part on his way, was the first who visited her, and he found her sitting with the Bible on her knee, wiping her spectacles: there were drops on the page, which showed what had dimmed the glasses.

In going along the road, several of the lads with whom Andrew had spent the preceding evening, were standing at the end of the loans which led to the farms where they were as herds or as ploughmen, and they blithely shook hands with him as he passed, hoping he would return with gold in goupens. But the cart soon drove beyond the limits of the circle which contained all his school-fellows, and reached the head of a rising ground, where, the road diverging behind the hills, Stoneyholm, and the woods and fields of the Craiglands, are hidden from the view. At this spot our young adventurer paused, and looked back; no presentiment of evil overcast his hopes at that moment, but a number of gay and cheerful recollections endeared the scene to him, and he said to the carrier, "It's a blithesome place yon, and I'm thinking it may be a while before I'll see sic bonny trees and green braes as the woods and lands o' the Craiglands."

After this, he continued to walk beside the carrier for some time in silence; and, indeed, nothing is remembered of the remainder of his journey to Glasgow, nor did he himself recollect any thing he passed, till the High Church steeples were in sight, which the carrier pointed out, by touching him on the back; for he was then seated on the cart, and had been for some time in a state of drowsy reverie, that seemed almost like sleep.

At Glasgow he was conducted to his relation, Mr Treddles, the manufacturer. It was about three o'clock when he arrived at the house; and as the worthy fabricator of muslins told ourselves at the last circuit, "there never was surely a droller like thummert o' a creature seen entering a biggit land. He had on a pair o' dark-blue pat-dyed rig-and-fur muckle-wheel worsted stockings, though it was a day that dogs lay panting wi' their tongues out, and his coat was cut wi' an eye to a considerable

increase baith in his bulk and stature. We were just gaun to tak our kail, and the gudewife bade Andrew sit in and partake, but he said,—‘Od, Mistress Treddles, ye’re far in the day wi’ your meal-time. I thought ye would hae had that o’er by twal hours, and as I hae ate the piece on the road that grannie gied me, I’m no that ready yet for ony mair—so wi’ your will, I’ll e’en gae out and look at the ferlies and uncocs o’ Glasgow.’

“Wi’ that,” quo’ Mr Treddles, “he whiskit like a whitteret out o’ the door, and we saw naething o’ him till mair than twa hours after, when he came home, and just confounded us, for he had been to see King William, and was up at the Hie Kirk—I’ll never forget the laugh we got, at what he said o’ the college. It’s been a sprose amang us ever sin syne. ‘Heh!’ quo’ he, ‘but yon’s a gruesome like place; the very winnocs are like the peering een and bent brows of auld Philosophorum.’

“It happened that night,” continued the manufacturer in his narration, “that we had some neighbours in to their tea, and the mistress had provided short-bread and seed-cake, wi’ some o’ her jelly and marmolet, according to the use and wont o’ such occasions. When the tea was filled out, our friend drew in his chair to the table, and wasna slack either wi’ teeth or claw on the dainties. ‘Ye seem to like that kind o’ bread, Andrew,’ said the mistress. ‘Atweel,’ quo’ he, ‘it’s no ill to tak,’ and wi’ that he continued to work awa’ at it wi’ the greatest industry; and when he was satisfied, he set back his chair, and took the chumla-lug, in afore Mrs M’Vicar, the major’s widow, a per-jink elderly woman, that never forgot it, till about nine o’clock, when he rose, and lifting one of the candles, said, ‘Mistress Treddles, I’ll awa to my bed; for I maun be up to get the Edinburgh carrier the morn’s morning by skreigh o’ day—Whar am I to cuddle?’—I thought we would have a’ deet at this. But when the lass took him wi’ another light to the strangers’ room, Mr Plank, that was o’ the company, a deep and observant man, said, ‘Yon lad’s no’ to be laugh’d at—He’ll learn mair havins belyve; and if he pursues his ain end wi’ honesty, and as little in the awe o’ the world as he seems to feel at present, he’ll thrive in London, or any other place wherein his lot may be cast.”

By this account, it would really seem that Andrew, in his outset, had produced a sensation even in Glasgow. It was certainly, however, not such as would have led any one to suppose he would ever become a favourite with the elegant and fashionable.

On the following morning, as he said himself, by "the skreigh o' day" he was mounted with his "pack of duds" on the top of one of the Edinburgh carts; and in due time, in the afternoon, reached Linlithgow, where the carriers stopped. "Lithgow for wells, and Glasgow for bells," is a saying that few school-boys in Scotland have not heard; and Andrew was deeply versed in those honourable traditions which exalt the affections of Scottish patriotism so highly, that, even with the eyes of manhood, the Scotchman is rarely to be found, who, with all that travel and experience teach to the contrary, will not contend for the superiority of the national monuments of his native land—to say nothing whatever of the superior excellence of her institutions. In Andrew this partiality was deeply impressed; and, with mingled sentiments of admiration and sorrow, he contemplated the ruins of the royal palace, and inspected the dilapidated fountains which gave rise to the rhyme quoted. Linlithgow, in its day, was the Versailles of Scotland; and the court, which resided there prior to the Reformation, was justly esteemed at the time one of the gayest in Europe. Holyrood and Stirling stand more dignified in the prejudices of the country, by tales of dark conspiracies and bold adventures; but the courtesies of chivalry and song are associated with Linlithgow.

While Andrew was hovering round the skirts of the Palace, an old woman, who happened at the time to be passing, with a large key, and a smaller tied to it, dangling in her hand, said, "Hey, lad, would you like to see the Queer and the King's seat?" This was a temptation that Andrew was not then in a humour to resist; but before indulging himself, he inquired what the sight would cost.

"Ye maun gie me twopence, I'se warrant," said the woman.

"Deed no, lucky," replied Andrew; "fools and their siller are soon parted. I'll gie you twal pennies gae ye like to tak it, and ye had better do; for I'm gaun out o' the kintra, and ye'll

hae nae chance to get either plack or bawbee frae me a' your days."

After some altercation Andrew was admitted, and sat himself in the very seat where the gallant and unfortunate James of Flodden field used to hear mass; and he saw also, with as sincere a faith in the truth of the story as any boy of his age did in the age when it happened, the chapel-aisle, where the apparition of St Andrew warned the King from that fatal campaign, which the muses of Scotland have never ceased to deplore, and never more impressively than in our own time, converting, as it were, by a beautiful alchemy, the memory of national disgrace and misfortunes into motives of national pride, that tend to add vigour to the energies of patriotism.

CHAPTER XI.

EDINBURGH.

THE feelings with which the relics of regal grandeur at Linlithgow had inspired our hero were greatly augmented, when, at an early hour next day, he beheld the Castle of Edinburgh rising above the mists that floated round its rocky base. But instead of indulging his curiosity when he reached the carrier's quarters, he immediately engaged a porter to carry his box, and to conduct him to Leith, where he was that day to embark in a London trader. Fortunately, the vessel was not to sail till the evening, and this allowed him several hours to inspect the curiosities of the city. The porter who had carried his trunk, on understanding his intention, offered his services, but they were declined; and for two reasons, the principal of which was, that he would expect payment for his pains; and the other, because he was a Highlandman, that thought Macallán More a greater man than Nebuchadnezzar.

Considering Andrew's intuitive perception of character, it is not probable from this opinion, for we quote his own words, that

he sustained any loss by refusing the Highlander's guidance; but in visiting the different parts of the Old Town, the Castle, and Holyrood-house, he sometimes wandered; and as the Edinburgh boys are not less inclined to mischief than their contemporaries elsewhere, his enquiries were not always answered with a strict adherence to truth, or the most benevolent wish to set him in the right. However, he nevertheless contrived to see all the most remarkable objects to which history has attached any importance; and having satisfied himself in that respect, he dined on "parliaments" and "quality," by which he both saved money and time, for he ate his dinner as he walked along.

As the time approached when it was requisite he should go back again to Leith, he met two ladies; one of them was a tall elegant girl, with a sprightly fashionable air; the other, considerably older, and of a more sedate demeanour. It was Mary Cunningham, and one of the governesses of the boarding-school where she had so long been.

"Wheelie!" exclaimed Mary with delight, the moment she saw him, "what's brought you here?"

Andrew for an instant stood aghast, to be so addressed by a lady so fine and fashionable; but seeing who it was, recovered himself, as it were, with an elastic bound, and said, in his familiar manner, "I cam frae the Stoneyholm to Glasgow on Johnny Gottera's cart, and syne here wi' the Edinburgh carrier."

"Did ye ever see such a modiwart like thing?" said Mary laughingly, turning to the governess; "but he's as pawkie as a fairy. Can ye say a' your fifty psalms yet, Wheelie?"

"May be I might, an' ye would hearken me again," was his answer, a little curiously, however. But to this Mary made no direct reply, only saying, "What are ye come to Edinburgh for?"

"I'm on my way to London."

"To London, Wheelie!" exclaimed Mary with astonishment; and then she added, briskly, "and so ye haena made your fortune at Kilwinning?"

Andrew blushed, and looked his reply.

"Miss Cunningham," interposed the governess, "this is a very improper conversation."

With these words they parted; Mary laughing gaily as Andrew, pleased and sheepishly, moved also forward in the opposite direction. When he had walked about twenty paces, he paused, and looked back; Mary, at the same time, also looked behind, and, seeing him, kissed her hand in a gay and triumphant manner.

Andrew, although strangely affected by the sight of the towering lily that Mary had grown, and overborne by her sprightliness, was delighted at the vivid recollection which she seemed to retain of the principal incidents with which her image, as a lassie, was associated in his recollection. It did not appear to him that her banter was embittered with any scorn; on the contrary, it had a flavour of kindness in it, which a youth of seventeen could not but enjoy with something allied to hope and pleasure. With a buoyant bosom, and a light step, he pursued his way to Leith, where he immediately went on board the vessel that was to him the bark of destiny.

For the first two days after the trader left Leith, like most of the passengers, he was so dreadfully afflicted with what Doctor Pringle calls "the grievous prostration," that he could not raise his head; but still there was something so queer in the manner in which he bore his sufferings, that it at once amused and interested his fellow-passengers. They saw by his appearance that he was only a simple country boy; but the self-possession which he evinced in the intervals of the malady, showed that, though clad in hodden-grey, he was not entirely made of rustic stuff. He, however, took no part in the conversation; and the opinion of his shrewdness and sagacity was formed from his looks, and the manner in which he set about his little offices, and chiefly by an observation on the biscuit, which was exceedingly hard—"It's very good," said he, "and will eat wi' pains."

On the day before reaching the Thames, his sickness had so much abated, that he began to enter into the humours of his companions, and an opportunity was not long wanting to show the irrepressible drollery of his character.

Among the passengers was a spruce young man, who had been a student at the University of Edinburgh; foppish in his dress, stiff and conceited in his manners, and singularly fasti-

dious towards all on board, insomuch that he was generally disliked; but still he so conducted himself, that he had not been exposed to any open ridicule. Andrew perceived how he was considered, and entering into the feelings of the party towards this unfortunate sprig of delicacy and condescension, addressed him after dinner, when the whole party, in consequence of a shower, were seated round the table below.

"I'm thinking," said he, very gravely, but at the same time looking pawkily and peeringly round the table, "that I have seen you before, and that ye hae had a roasted goose mony a day for your dipner. Were na ye 'prentice to Thomas Steek, the tailor in our parish?"

The student looked aghast while the laugh rose universal against him, and he repelled this assault on his gentility with the most vehement indignation.

"Na," said Andrew, "I'm sure ye needna be ashamed o' your trade, although it was thought that ye had fled the country-side for spoiling the cut o' Tammy Daidles's breeks. It's an honest calling a tailor, and I ne'er heard it said that ye were gien to cabbaging; but the auld wives thought ye werena sae gleg wi' your needle as some others that had served their time with the same master, though they said ye dippet your spoon in the parritch deeper than ony o' them."

The unfortunate fop was petrified. Every one but himself perceived the drift of the curious little country boy, and sat in admiration of what might be the issue; at last, the student, no longer able to restrain his rage, threatened to slay Andrew on the spot, who nevertheless, with the most perfect nonchalance, replied—"Ye had better no try that: for gin ye strike me for what I'm saying, I'll gar ye prove before the lords that you're no a tailor; and I'm sure if it be sae that ye're no o' that craft, I'll refer to the present company if ever they saw a creature so like ane. But it's no your faut; and if the han' o' God has made you wi' shanks like ellwands, and sma' fingers to pook needles through clait, we a' ken ye canna help it."

The student, under his foppery, was not destitute of sense, and by the little descriptive touches in this last sentence, suspecting that Andrew was not really serious, endeavoured to turn

the tables. But our hero was more than his match at banter; and before the end of the voyage had so raised himself in the opinion of his fellow-passengers, that they were universally of opinion he was calculated to make his way in London with great success, in spite of his little awkward figure, and the droll simplicity of his manners.

CHAPTER XII.

LONDON.

IMMEDIATELY on his arrival, Andrew was conducted to the house of his relation, Mrs Ipsey, where having received a note to Mr Vellum, the solicitor with whom her husband had provided him a situation, he went immediately to deliver it. It was rather adventurous for one so fresh from the country to attempt, on the first day, to find his way in London, with only "a gude Scotch tongue" for his guardian genie; the consequence was what might have been anticipated. He lost his way, and went wandering through the labyrinth of streets in Mary-le-bone, seeking, as it were, an outlet; his heart almost perishing within him. In this dilemma, however, he met with a singular stroke of good fortune. Charles Pierston had, about a year before, been taken into his uncle's counting-house in the city, and happening to be in that part of the town on business, they accidentally met. The joy of this encounter was excessive—it rescued Andrew from despair.

Charles was grown a gay and elegantly-formed youth, dressy and modish even to foppery, for his uncle was liberal and indulgent to him, perhaps to a fault; but he was still the same frank, generous, and warm-hearted lad, and although no contrast either in appearance or character could be more striking than what these two school-fellows presented, he shook hands with Andrew, and welcomed him to London at once with jokes and shouts of gladness.

"Lord bless me, but I am blithe to see you," cried our hero, his spirit rebounding up into all its wonted self-possession, in finding himself again under the encouraging countenance of "a kent face." "I have been lost among thir houses, man, for hours, till I believe my head's no right. Od sake, if I wasna ready to lie down an' dee, had it no been for shame!"

"Why didn't you call a coach?" said Pierston, ready to expire with laughter at the sincerity of Andrew's description of his perplexity.

"O, Charlie Pierston!" exclaimed the novice, in the utmost astonishment; "me hire a coach! Mary Conn in a coach!"—the folk would hae thought I had gane by mysel—Na, na, demented as I hae been, I was nae so far left to myself, to be guilty of ony sic extravagance—Me hire a whole coach!—Ah! Charlie, Charlie, I maun ca' mair canny; and ye ken I never had ony turn for gentility like you. But ye maun now show me the way to Lincoln's Inn, whar I'm gaun to learn the law."

Charles, delighted as he was to see his old and queer school-fellow, did not much relish the idea of walking with so singular a figure in the streets. Accordingly, when they reached the first stand, he called a coach; but, before stepping in, Andrew said, "Now, mind, Charlie, ye're to pay for't a', I'll no be a single bawbee; for I hae laid it down as a rule no to waste a plack on ony sort of pleasure."

"Well, well, never mind that; I'll settle for the coach this time," said Charles, "and so jump in."

When they were seated, Pierston gathered from him an account of his hopes and prospects, and he was irresistibly tempted to play him an initiatory prank; accordingly, when the coach reached the door of Mr Vellum's chambers, he leaped briskly out, and slipping the fare into the coachman's hand, whispered him to get all he could more from the other gentleman. The coachman was rogue enough for his own interest to enter into the frolic; and Charles hurrying away, pretending he was pressed for time, and in his flight calling back to Andrew that he would see him soon again, left him in the paws of the coachman.

"Two shillings, your honour," said the fellow, when he had assisted Andrew to alight.

"What's that for? Didna the ither lad pay you? It was him that hired you—ye needna look to me for ony payment."

There was a degree of tremour and indecision in the manner in which this answer was given, that encouraged the coachman to enforce his demand more resolutely, and he repeated it.

"I tell you, man, that it's no me ye're to apply to—what the deevil, if a frien' hire a chaise, and gie me a hurl, am I to pay the hire?—I never heard o' sic extortion—go awa' wi' you, man!"

Jehu had some relish of humour himself, and played still farther with the apprehensions of our hero, saying, he should pay for his friend, and settle it afterwards with him.

"It's ill getting a breek aff a Highlanman—get twa shillings frae that flea-luggit rinnagate Charlie Pierston, who had ne'er a doit that didna burn a hole in his pouch!—I ken him ouer weel to let his score gang to my lawin. No, my lad, it's of no use to argol-bargol wi' me. I'll no be bow-wow't out of my shillings ony hoo; and, as I said before, ye maun just gang your ways, for scot nor lot will I pay you, or the like o' you, if I should be damn'd for't, which is a mickle word for me to say;" and with that he walked briskly up the steps that led to Mr Vellum's chambers, while the coachman mounted his box, roaring with laughter, like the mill-lade at Kilwinning-brig in a speat, as Andrew afterwards told Pierston.

Mr Vellum was an able, acute, and intelligent man of business, in the prime of life, active, gentlemanly, and decisive. The moment that he cast his eye on our hero, he perceived he was an original, nor did he like him the less for his uncouth appearance. His knowledge of the world had indeed taught him, that, in all the secondary and laborious departments of business, such characters are of the most invaluable description; and in consequence, much to the amazement of several spruce young fellows, who were casting contemptuous glances aside on the stranger as they plied their nimble quills, he received him with unusual cordiality.

"I am very glad you have come," said Mr Vellum, "for it is

now term-time, and I doubt not you will soon make yourself useful."

"I'll no fail in the endeavour," replied Andrew; "but if I dinna at first come up to your expectation, ye maun just bear wi' me till my han's sooplet at the wark."

"I shall be satisfied with your endeavour, and you may now take your place at the desk."

"No the day, sir," said Andrew; "for I hae tint sic a time by losing mysel' in coming from Mr Ipsey's, that I maun look after the bit pack wi' my claes before dark. I'll be wi' you, however, by break o' day the morn's morning."

Mr Vellum acquiesced, and Andrew, invigorated by the satisfactory reception he had met with, and perhaps unconsciously also by the little experience he had gleaned in his adventure with Pierston, then proceeded with confidence to the house of a Mrs Callender, whom Mrs Ipsey had recommended to him for lodgings.

It was situated in a small court, off one of the streets in the vicinity of Red Lion Square, and in the neatness of all its appearance, justified the character which he had received of the landlady.

In consequence of coming from Mrs Ipsey, Andrew was shown the first floor; but when informed that the rent was a guinea a-week, he turned up his eyes, and gasped as if a load was on his heart. At last he was enabled to articulate, "Ye'll hae ither rooms?" and being answered in the affirmative, was conducted up stairs, where a bargain was concluded for an attic, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence per week. But we must not undertake to describe the details of his household arrangements; we shall, therefore, pass over the conversation which took place at the bargain-making, with simply remarking, that although Andrew thought Mrs Callender "dreadtu' deur" in the rent of her room, yet he was much satisfied with her orderly house and motherly appearance; and with all expedient haste proceeded to the wharf to get his luggage brought home. This, however, involved difficulties which he had not anticipated.

He guessed from the length of the way, which did not seem abridged by the necessity he was under of enquiring, at every

turn, for "the road to Wapping," that the expense of portage for his trunk would be considerable, and he made up his mind to go the whole extent of a shilling. But on reaching the wharf, to his inexpressible astonishment, no man could be found who would undertake the task for less than five shillings, the very mention of which brought at once an interjection from the innermost chambers of his soul, and a cold sweat on his brows. The steward of the vessel advised him to take a coach, but this was a suggestion of prodigality still more insurmountable; so that, seeing no other likely way of getting the trunk carried, he manfully resolved to bear it on his own shoulders.

By this time it was almost dark, and there was some risk that the landmarks, which he had observed to guide his way, would be soon obscured from his view if he did not make haste. Having therefore shifted his coat and waistcoat, for the old ones which he had worn in the passage, he got the trunk on his back, and bravely set forward from Miller's wharf to find his way to Holborn, knowing that, if he was once there, he would soon discover the road to Mrs Callender's. But to carry a well-packed trunk through the crowded streets of London, was no easy task to a stranger; and, long before he reached the Royal Exchange, the shades of darkness had deepened overhead, and the lights and lamps around him shone forth in all their wonted nightly splendour. Still, however, with indefatigable perseverance, winding his toilsome way along, he at length, after many halts, reached St Sepulchre's church, where he placed the trunk on the wall of the churchyard, and rested to breathe and to wipe his forehead.

He had not travelled so burdened unnoticed:—a gang of street-robbers early marked him for their prey, and dogged him like blood-hounds in the track of their game; but his wariness had prevented an attack till they saw him at rest.

One of those freebooters, a little in advance before the other, passed him a few paces, and, giving a loud shriek, fell down on the pavement, seemingly in convulsions. In the first impulse of the moment, Andrew, as the thieves had calculated, started forward to his assistance; but fortunately, in doing so, his trunk fell from the railing. The jeopardy in which he saw that it

was immediately placed, by the companions of the impostor running towards it, checked his humanity, and he clung to it with the fond anxiety of a mother over her darling in danger. The thieves cursed his inhumanity, and the man in convulsions instantly recovering, rose, and walked away with an alacrity which at once astonished and alarmed our adventurer, who required no farther testimony respecting the character of the parties.

Saving only in this incident, he reached the house of Mrs Callender unmolested; and nothing could exceed the laud and admiration of that worthy dame, when she heard what he had accomplished, and the presence of mind with which he had preserved his trunk from the Philistines.

"I'm sure," said she, "Mr Wylie, that you must stand in need of your tea. Do sit down, and in the parlour I'll get it ready, with a nice comfortable bit of toast."

"I would like that unco weel," replied Andrew; "but it's dainties I mauna think o'. So I'll thank you to get me a mutchkin of strong yill and a cooky, which will baith serve me for four-hours and supper."

Mrs Callender declared, that she did not believe any such things could be had in London. But she could get him a slice of ham and a pint of porter.

"The woman's deleerit!" exclaimed Andrew; "does she think that I'll make a sow o' mysel' wi' drinking a whole pint o' porter?"

Presently, however, recollecting that there was some difference between the Scotch and English measure, he enquired the expense; and, having saved the portorage of his luggage, he adopted her suggestion as to the porter, but he would yield to no such seduction as the ham.

Having recruited his strength in Mrs Callender's parlour, he proposed going to bed, as he was much tired. "But," said he, 'I needna be laying in ony stores till I see about me in the morning; so that, gin ye hae ony sic thing as a candle-doup aboot the house, I'll be obliged if ye'll lend me't the night.'

This request needed some explanation. In the end, however, a mutual understanding took place on the subject, but without

materially tending to exalt the character for liberality of our hero in the opinion of his landlady. Nevertheless, she lent him the candle.

Having retired for the night to his chamber, and extinguished the light, he knelt down at the bedside. But the hopes, the wishes, and the anxieties which the young adventurer communicates to heaven in such a time, belong to a more holy strain of feeling than we may here venture to unfold.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

MR VELLUM had for clients several persons of high rank, and, among others, the Earl of Sandford. His lordship was still on the gay side of thirty, and justly considered one of the most elegant men of the age; but from the date of his marriage with Lady Augusta Spangle, the daughter of the Marquis of Aber-side, he had disappointed the expectations of his friends. Instead of taking that splendid part in the deliberations of the kingdom, for which he seemed naturally, by his animated temperament and lofty eloquence, peculiarly qualified, he suddenly rushed into the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation, and squandered his estate and talents with a vehemence that not only surprised, but alarmed, while it mortified his friends and admirers; for it appeared to be the result of some wild, yet voluntary resolution, as if he sought, by the velocity of a headlong career, to escape the miseries of some mysterious sorrow.

When his lordship first entered the arena of fashion, he was strikingly handsome, and the expression of his countenance, which was nobly intelligent, indicated great elevation of sentiment, tinctured with an urbanity full of playfulness and good humour; but, at the period of which we are now speaking, he was become pale and slender, an elegant listlessness pervaded his whole frame, and his voice, which was naturally clear and

finely modulated, had dwindled into an habitual monotonous simper, suitable, indeed, to the small topics he affected to discuss, but which he evidently cared as little about as he did for any thing else. Occasionally, however, his true character would shine out, and show that this foppery was but assumed, and that he might still be roused to better things, and stand forth in the erect superiority of a genius conscious of its innate strength, and ready, when sufficient cause required, to manifest its incalculable power.

About the time that our hero arrived in London, it had been remarked that the earl went less into company than formerly, and that he sometimes spent the morning in the House of Lords, yawning, it is true, to the tuneless eloquence and metaphysical distinctions of some litigious advocate from the north, addressing, with equal effect, the chancellor and the wooolsacks, and no less delighting the attendant solicitors than the faded worthies of Elizabeth's reign in the tapestry, who, in appeal cases, are commonly all the spectators. Once in the evening, when he happened, in the course of that spring, to obey a summons of the House on an important political question, he was so far excited by the conflict of debate that he actually made a speech of three sentences, so judicious and well expressed, that it tingled in the ears of the most experienced senators with a thrill of a new sensation, and was hailed as the symptom of a redeeming spirit, that might in time convert him from those pursuits which had equally injured his health, his fortune, and his character.

Some time after this, his lordship had occasion to confer with Mr Vellum, and it happened, when he called at his chambers, that our hero was the only person within. A brief colloquy, in consequence, took place at the door, which had the effect of interesting his lordship's curiosity; in so much, that partly with the intention of resting a few minutes, perhaps more, however, with the design of extracting a little amusement, he was induced to walk into the office, and take a seat on one of the elevated stools at the desk. Andrew had no conception of the rank of the visiter; and, as he was not altogether satisfied with this freedom, he stood warily holding the inner door open, as an intimation to his lordship that he ought not to remain; but the

oddity of his appearance, and the sly suspicion of his looks, with the simplicity of his manners, diverted the peer, who, after inspecting him through a quizzing-glass from head to foot, said, with an affectation of fashionable inanity, swinging his feet at the same time, "These stools of your's, young man, are very tall."

"Ay," replied Andrew, "they're geyan heigh." The assumed indifference of the earl was almost discomposed by the flatness of this answer; and, pulling out his handkerchief to hide the effect, said, at the same time, "Pray, friend, where were you caught?"

"Sir, I never was caught," was the indignant answer.

"Indeed!" said his lordship, "how then came you to London?"

"How should I come?"

"A very satisfactory answer, I must confess," rejoined the earl; "and I have no doubt you had a great deal of pleasure in your travels?"

"Ah, trouth!" quoth our hero, "if the bocking the soul out o' the body be ony pleasure, I had enough o' that pleasure! Gude forgie me! but I was amaisht tempted to mak awa' wi' mysel. Eh! I thought: if I could hae dee't, it would hae been a satisfaction. Na, na, sir, I would nae advise my sworn enemy to come in a ship by sea frae Scotland."

The earl, still preserving all due seriousness, said, "May I presume to enquire if you are a lawyer?"

"I'm learning," replied Andrew modestly.

"A very judicious answer," was the ironical observation of his lordship; "and how long may you have been in the profession?"

"Before coming here, I was weel on to three years with John Gledde the messenger, and I hae been three days wi' Mr Vellum."

"It is an honourable profession, and I doubt not you will become a distinguished ornament to it—in time," said his lordship dryly.

"I'm thinking it's a geyan kittle trade though; but I'll ettle my best," replied Andrew, none disconcerted.

"But," resumed the earl, "what do you think of London?"

"Poo!" cried the clerk; "London! a wheen brick houses. O,

man, if ye could but see Glasgow and Edinburgh!—there you would see something—look at Holyrood-House, that's a palace for you—but St James's here, it's just like an auld to'booth. But, sir, ye'll hae to gae awa', for it's the time for me to gang for my dinner, that I may be back to keep the house—and I hae a notion your business is no very particular the day."

"It certainly," said his lordship, "will keep to another day but where do you dine?"

"At a very creditable house, sir; the Caledonian, in a neighbour-street."

"And how much may you pay?" enquired his lordship, with unaffected curiosity, prompted by an interest which he began to take in this original.

"Sevenpence; and a bawbee to the laddie," replied Andrew.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the earl, touched with a sentiment of compassion, never having by any accident before heard at what rates the humble and industrious youth of the vast metropolis are obliged to live.

"Ay, it's awfu' dear," said Andrew, mistaking the cause of his lordship's astonishment; "but the victual's good," adding, "it's a hard thing, sir, to live in London. Some take a mutch-kin of porter to their dinner, but I aloken my drowth wi' Adam's wine."

"I presume, then, that you do not allow yourself much indulgence in public amusements?" said his lordship.

"As to that," replied Andrew, "I take my share, for the singers are far better than ours; indeed, they hae tunes and voices like leddies and gentlemen. But, sir, it's no canny to gang near them; for nae further gane than yestreen, last night ye ken, when I was harkening to twa singing like nightingales in Lincoln's Inn Square, a ne'er-do-weel pocket-picker whuppet the napkin out of my pouch, wi' the slippery hand o' an evil spirit, before I kent what I was. Oo, sir, but there's a terrible power o' ill-doers about London!"

"O, I understand! you mean by the public amusements, listening to the ballad-singers in the street," said the earl, drolling.

"I can assure you," replied Andrew, "they werena like bal-

lad-singers at a'; and it's my notion: they were playactors out o' bread."

"Have you been at the theatres?" said his lordship.

"No yet; but I'm gaun. Our clerks are to treat me some night soon; and they say—they a' say—that I'll see—Gude kens what I'll no see; but it maun be something vera extraordinar, for they're just out the body about catching the effec, as they ca't. However, effecs here or effecs there, it's no right o' you, sir, to keep me clishmaclavering when I should be taking my pick, that the master's wark mayna gae by."

The earl admitted the justness of the observation; and perceiving the roguery at the bottom of the intended treat on the part of the other clerks, became desirous himself to enjoy some of the virgin fancies of Andrew; he therefore pretended, as he had not found Mr Vellum, he would write a note for him.

Being furnished accordingly with the necessary implements, he requested the solicitor that Andrew might be sent to a particular coffee-house, at eleven o'clock that evening, with a letter for Servinal, his valet, who would be there to meet him; and that Mr Vellum might have some idea of the object of this singular request, he added, "The countess receives masks, but your clerk can take a part without any disguise."

"Now," said his lordship to Andrew, as he folded up the letter, "this relates to a matter on which my heart is much set, and I rely upon your fidelity in placing it safe in Mr Vellum's own hand."

"That ye may do, and sleep sound upon't," was the answer; "for be he living, or be he dead, I will see him; and I wouldna that a thing g'ien to me in the way of trust was mislippent—No, though I was to die on the spot. But O, sir, really I'm growing uneasy; for if I dinna get my dinner noo, thae deevils, our clerks, will be back; and if they fin' out that I'm toom, they'll fish to famish me. It would therefore, sir, be very obliging if ye hae done your pleasure and needs, to gae quietly awa', and let me rin for my bit chack o' dinner."

The good-humour of the earl, perhaps we ought to add his habitual politeness, could not withstand the reiterated urgency of this appeal, and he accordingly withdrew, renewing his in-

junctions for the careful delivery of the letter. But this was unnecessary; Andrew was fully impressed with the importance of letters addressed by clients to their solicitors, and well aware that his future success in life depended quite as much on his integrity as upon any other quality.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MASQUERADE.

WHEN Andrew came back after dining, Mr Vellum, who had been all the forenoon in Westminster Hall, was in the office; and on reading the earl's epistle, which our hero faithfully delivered into his own hands, he was not a little diverted by its contents.

"Did the gentleman," said he, "tell you who he was?"

"I never speert," replied Andrew; "but surely he would put his name to the letter."

"O yes; but I cannot imagine what has induced him to write to me on such a subject."

"He maun answer for that himsel'," said Andrew; but he seemed very particular. It's surely something very particular, sir, for he stayed so lang, and asked so many questions, that I was obligated to tell him to gang awa'."

"But what sort of man did you find him?"

"I'm thinking," replied Andrew, "that he's something in the perfumery line, for he had a fine scented pocket-napkin, and was wonorous perjink in his words—a' on chandler pins; and baith in shape and habit he was a slimmer piece of gentelity."

"I hope," said the solicitor, "that you treated him with all due respect, for he was no other than the Earl of Sandysford."

"O, Mr Vellum, what a stupid fool fallow he maun hae thought I was—a yearl! Me speaking in the way I did to him, and he a' the time a yearl! Howsoever, he canna hae't to say

that I neglected his business, or didna mind yours, and I'll mak up for't to him in decorum at another time."

"I hope so," said Mr Vellum jocularly; "but I have something particularly for you to do this evening. You will take a letter from me to one Mr Servinal, as directed; he is a civil man, and I have particular reasons for wishing you to become acquainted with him. I need not say more, than that you will endeavour to make yourself agreeable to him."

"If it's for your interest, sir," replied Andrew, "ye need hae nae fear o' that. But eleven o'clock is an awful time o' night to be seeking after ony honest business."

"True," said Mr Vellum; "but, in our profession, all hours and times must be at the command of our clients."

"Say nae mair, say nae mair; by night or by day, Mr Vellum, I'll try to do my part," replied Andrew; and in this manner the prelude for the evening was arranged.

At the time appointed, the valet was at his post, and had not to wait long for our hero. Servinal had been duly instructed by his master; and accordingly, after some conversation, containing a number of apparent facts and evidential circumstances, which Andrew was to relate, with all proper fidelity, to Mr Vellum, Servinal proposed an adjournment to the playhouse, under the tempting pretext that, being acquainted with the doorkeepers, he could get them both in free at that hour. To this our hero could make no possible objection; on the contrary, he considered his assent to the proposal as in strict conformity to the instructions he had received, to make himself agreeable to so important a client as the valet appeared to be. A coach was thereupon called, and they were speedily at Sandyford House.

On reaching the precincts of the mansion, Andrew had no reason to doubt that he was approaching one of the principal theatres. The square was thronged with carriages; a multitude of curious spectators, to see the company as they were set down, occupied the pavement; and the vestibule was filled with a countless host of servants in livery, the domestics of the guests, and friends of the domestics.

The earl had instructed Servinal, in order that Andrew might not be exposed to the insolent impertinence of the menials, to

take care that it should not be known among them he was not in character: so that, when he entered the hall with his rustic garb and awkward manner, they set him down as Freelove in the character of Jemmy, in the farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, and the sincere astonishment with which he gazed around, excited their unanimous admiration and plaudits as an incomparable performer.

Andrew clung to his companion in a degree of delighted alarm, saying involuntarily, as he was conducted up the grand staircase to the state apartments, where the company were assembling, "What a beautiful house this is! Odsake, man, it's as grand as Solomon's temple."

"Were you ever there?" said a mask in a domino in passing. Andrew instantly recognized a voice that he had heard before, and was petrified. It was the earl, at whose appearance Servinal immediately withdrew, telling our hero that he was now free to go every where, and pick up what amusement he could for the remainder of the evening.

Notwithstanding all the freedom which the belief that he was in a place of public amusement was calculated to inspire, Andrew shyly entered the central salon, from which the drawing-rooms opened. A party in mask, with the earl at their head, followed him. He thought, however, they were the players—the hirelings of the entertainment, and expected them to tumble, and perform other antic feats of corporeal ingenuity.

While under this misconception of his situation, just within the door of the salon, with his back leaning on the pedestal of a statue of Terpsichore, the well-fleshed Countess of Gorbilands, in the character of Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt, came up to him. Her ladyship had not the most remote idea that he was not in character. Being herself a Scotchwoman, she imagined, from his dress, that he had taken the part of a Scottish lad, and addressed him accordingly, imitating the rattle of Lady Rodolpha with considerable humour.

Andrew, however, was disconcerted by what he considered her impudence, and said, "Gang about your business, woman, and no fash me. I'll hae naething to say to you—I tell you, woman, ye may just whistle on your thumb."

"The brute!" exclaimed the countess, forgetting her part—
 "How can he have got into the house? He has no character."

"I'm thinking," said Andrew, dryly, "that I have a muckle better character than you."

Her ladyship was amazed, and returned to her party, utterly at a loss to understand the phenomenon.

At this moment, Col. Coleson, in the character of Moll Flagon, came up, amidst shouts of laughter, exclaiming, "Where is he—where is the gay deceiver?" presenting Andrew at the same moment with her pocket-pistol, *alias* brandy-bottle.

Our hero looked at Moll for about half a minute with the most unequivocal marks of aversion. At last he said, "I wonder how the doorkeepers could let sic a tinkler in!"

"Does he disown me?" exclaimed Moll, in a rapture of desperation. "Will the perjured wretch cast me off from his tender embraces in the face of the whole world?" And she began to weep bitterly, wiping her eyes with the corner of her tattered shawl, and taking a sip from her bottle with infinite humour.

"The woman's fou," said Andrew coolly to the bystanders, and walked away somewhat anxiously to shun her.

"See how he deserts me," cried the obstreperous Moll; "he abandons me like the rest of his faithless sex, the cruel gay deceiver!"

Andrew, terrified by the vehemence of Moll's manner, turned back to reason with her, and said, "Honest woman, ye're in a mistake."

The unaffected simplicity of this address was too much even for Coleson, with all his confidence; and, regardless of the proprieties of his part, he joined in the general laughter that it called forth from all present.

Poor Andrew then appealed to the spectators, and assured them, with the most perfect sincerity, that he had never seen the woman before since he was born. "She's just a randy," said he, "and ought to be set in the joughs."

"What's the matter—what's the to do here?" cried a Justice Woodcock. "What are ye after? Tramp, madam; and as for you, sir, take yourself off."

Andrew would have walked away rebuked, but Moll took

hold of the seeming magistrate by the coat-tail, exclaiming, "Is this a proper treatment of the fair sex, Justice Woodcock? I thought you had been a better man in your day, than to see a poor innocent girl, that had nothing but her virtue, so wronged by such a cruel, a perfidious, a base, and wicked, wicked man."

"Poor Molly! and what has he done to you?" said the Justice.

"What has he done!" exclaimed Molly, starting from out her tears. "He has undone me?"

Andrew was thunderstruck, and looked around in despair, but saw no friendly visage; in the same moment Moll clasped him in her arms, and pulling out his watch, cried, "This at least will procure me some comfort." And in putting the watch into her pocket, she took out her bottle, and indulged in another sip.

"Softly, Moll," said Justice Woodcock, "you must give me the watch."

"Oh!" cried Andrew, in a long and vibrating tone of horror; but suddenly mustering courage, he exclaimed, "As sure as death, sir, this is as big a lie as ever Cluty himself cleckit. Only send for my master, Mr Vellum, and he'll testify that I'm a poor honest lad, of creditable parentage, just come frae Scotland. O, what had I to do here! Gie me my watch, I tell you—gie me my watch—thieves, thieves!"

The earnest vigour of lungs with which he uttered this exclamation, resounded through all the splendid chambers, and the whole music and merriment was in a moment silenced by the alarm. Andrew, in the same instant, snatched the watch from Moll who was then in the act of handing it to the justice, and flying off amidst a universal cataract of laughter, never looked behind till he was out of breath, and safe in the street.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INVITATION.

HASTENING home to his lodgings with the expedition of a delinquent flying from justice, Andrew was undressed, and over head and ears among the bed-clothes, before he made any attempt to rally his scattered senses. In this situation he soon became more composed, and began to think that he had perhaps been subjected to the influence of some delusion. He had heard of Johnny Fa and Lord Cassillis' lady, and of mountebanks casting glamour in the eyes of their spectators, by which blue-bottle flies, with pins at their tails, are made to appear in the shape of gamecocks drawing logs of timber; and he was not sure but that some such slight of magic had been practised by the players on himself.

This first effort of returning reason, as his agitation subsided, was succeeded by a still more rational conclusion, no less than that really he did not know where he had been, and therefore it would be as well for him to say nothing of his adventure next morning to the other clerks in the office; and with this prudent determination, he said his prayers and fell asleep.

But although he had resolved to be silent, he could not divest himself of a certain indescribable feeling of anxiety and apprehension when he went to the desk in the morning. He sat down without saying a word, and wrote on with more than his wonted assiduity, while his companions were recounting to each other their exploits and gallantries, and strong-ale debaucheries at the Coalhole and Finish, after the play.

When Mr Vellum entered the office, the sound of his tread was echoed by the beating of Andrew's heart; and a sensation of fear, almost as painful as the terrors of suspected guilt, took possession of our hero's whole mind, as that gentleman said to him dryly, "Well, Wylie, did you see Mr Servinal last night?"

"A genteel man answered to his name," replied Andrew, "and I gave him the letter."

"Had you any conversation with him?" enquired the solicitor, amused at the dexterity of Andrew's evasion, and interested by his evident embarrassment.

"A great deal," said our hero briskly; and then he faithfully recounted the whole of what he conceived to be the business-part of the conversation.

Vellum commended his attention and memory, and added, "Did you stop long with him?"

"We were not a great while thegither," replied Andrew with a sigh.

"I hope he did not detain you long; for I do not choose that my young men should keep late hours."

"It will be my endeavour to satisfy you, sir, in that particular, for I'm no fond of late hours mysel': they are very bad things," said our hero, morally.

"Yes," replied his master; "and London is so full of temptations to youth and inexperience."

"It's an awful place," was the emphatic answer.

"But you got safe home, after parting from the gentleman," said Mr Vellum.

"Ay," replied Andrew with a nod, as if he spoke inwardly; "ay, I got safe home."

The solicitor could, with difficulty, keep his gravity; but, after a momentary pause, he looked sharply at our hero, and then, in a jocular tone, said, "I suspect, Wylie, you were engaged in some adventure last night."

"I fancy every body may meet wi' as meikle, and do nae wrang either," was the answer to this home question.

"Then you did meet with something?" said his master.

"I canna, without a lie, say I met wi' naething."

"But what was it?" enquired the solicitor, with an affected tone of impatience.

"I'm sure, sir, that's no an easy question to answer; for yeken I'm but a new come stranger in London, and a's no ill that's ill like."

"Then I presume that what you met with was something you thought strange?"

"I dare say," replied Andrew, "it may no be strange here."
 "It is very extraordinary that you refuse to tell me what it was."

"Me refuse, sir!" exclaimed Andrew; "I'm sure I never refused."

"Then why don't you satisfy me?"

"It's baith my earnest wish and interest, sir, to gie you the fullest satisfaction in my power," replied our hero; and he looked at his master with such an air of simplicity, that Vellum was utterly at a loss whether to set him down as a knave or a fool. At this moment one of Lord Sandysford's servants entered, with a card from his lordship, requesting Mr Wylie's company to dinner that day. Andrew was petrified—he grew as pale as ashes, and trembled from head to foot, totally incapable of comprehending the mystery of this device. Vellum smiled, and said, "I hope you are not engaged, and that you can oblige his lordship."

"O, am sure," cried our hero, panting, "I'll do ony thing in the world to oblige my lord!"

The footman was accordingly dismissed with a card to the earl, accepting of the invitation. "You are a fortunate youth," said Mr Vellum, "to have made so early such an enviable acquaintance."

"But, sir," interrupted Andrew, "what will I do, for I hae na claes fit for my lord's company?"

"Take my advice," said his master gravely, and with sincerity, "make no change in your appearance, but only be careful that you are particularly clean and neat."

Mr Vellum was more in the secret of his adventure the preceding evening than he pretended. In fact, the solicitor had been himself at the masquerade, and partook of the merriment which "the incomparable unknown" occasioned, as *The Morning Post* called Andrew in describing the entertainment, for the purpose of advertising the savoury merits of the cook and confectioner who provided the supper.

In resuming his duty at the desk, Andrew marvelled, as he copied, on the singularity of having received an invitation to dine with an earl; and he was shrewd enough to guess that it

could neither be on account of his learning, his rank, nor the fashion of his appearance.

The invitation which Andrew had received from the earl was soon known among the other clerks, and their first notion led them to fancy that he was related to his lordship; they began, in consequence, to think he was not, after all, the mean sort of half-witted creature which they had hitherto thought him, but an eccentric and original character. This idea received something like confirmation, when one of them, enquiring in what degree of relationship he stood with the earl, Andrew dryly replied, "Really I canna say; but I believe we're sprung of the same stock." Some of the more knowing, however, began to suspect that it possibly might be on account of his odd and singular appearance, and that his lordship, in conferring the honour of the invitation, slyly intended to amuse his own friends by showing off the curiosity—a shrewd suspicion, characteristic of that precocious knowledge of the world, which is one of the chief, if not the very chief itself, of all the peculiarities of the metropolitan youth, especially of that sharp and pert tribe of them who, like the imps that infest the road leading to Paradise, chatter, frisk, and flutter in the avenues to the tribunals of justice.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DINNER PARTY.

ANDREW having provided himself with the address of Sandyford House, was at the door as punctually as the clock went the hour. The knocker, at that moment, seemed to him too ponderous for his hands to raise, and after pausing for about half a minute to recover courage, he tapped with his knuckle, to announce his claim for admission. The porter, a saucy corpulent fellow, opened, and demanded what he wanted. "I am come to get my dinner with my lord," was the reply. The corner of John

Swell's lips crooked of their own accord downward into an expression of ineffable contempt and exclusion, when, fortunately, the footman who had carried the invitation to Vellum's, happened to come into the hall, and, recognizing our hero, conducted him up stairs to the drawing-room, where the other guests, with the earl and countess, were waiting, in expectation of his approach.

Andrew was agitated and confused; but in ascending the stairs, he recovered sufficient presence of mind to enable him to observe that the house was the same, which, on the preceding night, he had believed was one of the theatres; and the idea suddenly flashed upon him, that he owed the honour of the invitation to the simplicity of his Scottish manners and appearance. The servant who showed him the way, had observed his confusion, and when Andrew paused, as this notion came across his mind, he conceived him to be overwhelmed with diffidence, and stopped also, with a sneer, being aware of the motives which had induced his master to invite him to dinner. But a moment's reflection set all things right with our hero, and he seemed, to the saucy valet, to undergo a marvellous transmutation, from an awkward vulgar boy, into an easy and confident gentleman. He advanced towards the door of the drawing-room with as light a step, and as cheerful a countenance, as he ever approached the cottage of his schoolmaster with the chat and jokes of the village, and was ushered into the splendid company without feeling the slightest embarrassment; on the contrary, he went forward in that agreeable state of self-possession, which a man feels when he knows it is in his power to dispense pleasure. Lord Sandford, who possessed an acute perception of the latent powers of character, perceived, by the change, on the instant he threw his eyes on him as the door opened, that he was not the entire simple oddity which he had at first imagined, and immediately went towards him, and shook him by the hand, in a manner that raised him at once, as it were, into the equality and footing of a friend.

"Mr Wylie," said his lordship, "I ought to apologise for the freedom which I have taken with you."

"Say nae mair about it, my lord," interrupted Andrew; "I

maun pay for my experience of the world as weel as my betters; but it was an awfu' thing though."

This simple reply was received as original humour, and much amused the high-bred assemblage, both by its gusto and familiarity. Sir Timothy Knicketty, the connoisseur, who was of the party, declared it was truly *à la Teniers*.

When they had descended to the dining-room, the ladies were particularly anxious to share our hero among them; but he put an end to the controversy, by taking the seat of honour between the Duchess of Dashingwell and the Countess, who, independent of their rank, were the two finest women in the room. Her grace was a blithe, open-tempered character, that could carry a joke as great a length as any lady of her class.

During dinner, nothing for some time particularly occurred. Andrew, with a quick and cunning eye, observed the etiquettes of the table as they were performed by others, and acquitted himself without committing any extraordinary breach of the wonted ceremonials; in this respect he was indeed superior to many a scion of nobility, from Eton or Oxford. The Duchess of D—— led him on in conversation, and he said a number of droll and naïf things, which were received as bon-mots of the most racy flavour. Peels of laughter bore testimony to all the house with what success he sustained his character, and as the wine mounted, his confidence rose. Before the end of the second course he was in high glee, and perfectly at his ease; inasmuch, that the very servants in attendance could with difficulty maintain the requisite taciturn decorum of their office. But all restraint of duty, place, and circumstance, were in the end overwhelmed, when, in reply to an invitation from her grace to take wine with her, he exclaimed, "Na, leddies, if ye gar me drink at this rate, the wine will be running in my head, and I'll be kitting you till ye keekle or a's done; so look to the consequences."

Lord Sandysford enjoyed the scene with a relish to which he had long been a stranger; but the countess was the least affected of the whole party by the simplicity or the art of Andrew. Her ladyship, however, maintained throughout the evening a graceful propriety, that admirably became her station. She seldom con-

descended to laugh; still, at times, a pleasant, ringing, cheerful sound came from her heart, that showed she could enjoy the pleasantries of life as joyously as her neighbours. On these occasions her lord would look at her, as if startled by some unexpected note of pleasure, but in a moment her hilarity was suppressed, and she was as cold and formal as before.

The evening's entertainment had, however, generally the effect of inspiring the earl with a grateful feeling towards Andrew; for it is one of the blessed consequences of hearty laughter, to stir into action all the kindly humours of the mind; and his lordship determined to have him for his frequent guest. The rest of the company, particularly the Duchess of D—, was scarcely less delighted with his eccentricities; and when, after returning to the drawing-room, she persuaded him to sing, he fairly won her heart, and was chosen a regular invitant to all her parties for the winter. Indeed, to do him justice, in the choice of his song he displayed equal taste and judgment, and the execution was worthy of the choice. His song was that ludicrous enumeration of goods and chattels, beginning with "My father wi' his deeing breath," in the performance of which, flushed with the Tuscan, he addressed himself so eagerly to her grace, snapping his fingers with exultation, and nodding and winking, that she was obliged to throw herself on a sofa, holding both her sides, exclaiming, "For the love of heaven, stop him—stop him, or I shall die!"

The sagacity with which Andrew had thus improved the first impression of his peculiarities, taught him instinctively to choose that happy moment for taking leave, when the effect he had produced was liveliest. At the end of his song he accordingly sprang away, as if he had suddenly recollected himself, crying, "Megsty me, what am I about, daffing till this time here, when I hae got a codicil to copy to a dying man's last will and testament!" And with that, giving a ludicrous nod for a bow, he ran down stairs, and hastened home.

CHAPTER XVII.

BORROWING.

THE first winter thus passed with our hero in a manner that most young men would have deemed enviable, and the prudent regarded as fraught with danger to his future fortune; but his simplicity remained invincible to the blandishments of pleasure, and the sterling worth of his innate character raised him more and more in the estimation of Lord Sandyford.

One morning, on going to chambers, he found Mr Vellum thoughtful and vexed. He had been, on the preceding evening, engaged with money-lenders, relative to an additional mortgage, which was immediately required for the earl, and the negotiation had not been satisfactory. The money was obtained; but on such terms, that he was almost afraid to communicate them to his lordship—not that he had any reason, from his experience of the earl's disposition and temper, to apprehend that his lordship would trouble himself for a moment on the subject; but he felt, as a man of business, that he had not been so happy in his management as on other similar occasions.

After sitting some time, turning over the memoranda of the transaction, and casting about in his thoughts for what he should say to the earl, he happened to look towards the desk where Andrew was earnestly employed at his vocation, his little round smooth-haired head following his pen as if it was slowly rolling on the paper; and it occurred to him, that perhaps no fitter envoy could be employed in the business than the droll and uncouth oddity before him. From what had already taken place between him and the earl, the humour and peculiarities of Andrew seemed likely to render the communication less disagreeable to his lordship, than his own dry and regular method of explaining the circumstances, and he summoned him at once from the desk.

"You must go, Wylie," said he, "to Lord Sandyford with these papers. They contain some matters respecting the loan

of twenty thousand pounds that I have procured for his lordship."

"Twenty thousand pounds!—barro't money!" exclaimed Andrew. But his master, without noticing the exclamation, continued—"And you will tell him, that it really could not be obtained on better terms; that, in fact, at present every thing in the city is drained by an instalment of the government-loan; and money can only be raised with the utmost difficulty, and on terms I am almost ashamed to state."

"I wish—I wish," said Andrew, "that my lord may haud thegither twenty thousand pounds a' at ance; and wasting baith at heck and manger, wi' bardie leddies and whirligig fool-fellows at yon gait."

Vellum was folding up the papers while our hero made this observation; and a little relieved from his anxiety by having selected him for his minister, said jocularly, "You may as well give his lordship a word of advice on the subject, Wylie, if you find him in the humour."

"Atweel I'll no grudge to do that," replied Andrew, seriously; "for he's a fine man, and his leddy a most discreet woman—only a wee thought ouer muckle ta'en up wi' hersel'. It's a pity that my lord and her dinna draw thegither so weel as could be wished."

Vellum was startled by this remark, and looking earnestly and inquisitively at Andrew, said, "Have you heard any thing about them?"

"Me hear about them! What could I hear about them? I ken nobody that's acquaint wi' ony o' them save yoursel'; but I have twa holes in my head, and as many windows, and I can hearken at the aue, and keek out at the ither, and learn what's gaun on in the world just as weel as ither folk. My leddy, Mr Vellum, is mair weel-bred in the parleyvoo style to her gude-man than a kindly wife should be, and my lord fashes at her formality."

"You are a strange creature, or I am mistaken," said Vellum, as he handed him the papers; "and I hope you will not blunder in this business."

Andrew, as he received them, assured his master that he

might depend he would do his best endeavours both to give him and the earl satisfaction, and, taking his hat, hastened to Sandyford House, where he was immediately admitted. "What! Wylie, are you sent?" cried his lordship, somewhat surprised when our hero entered.

"For lack o' a better hand, my lord, the master bade me tak thir papers to your lordship, and to tell you, that he was vera sorry he couldna get the siller on ony thing like Christian terms at this time."

His lordship smiled, saying, "I thought he knew that I never expected it on any thing like Christian terms."

"It's a great soom, my lord," resumed Andrew, looking at the earl from under his brows, "and maun hae ta'en a hantle o' gathering and gripping to make it up; and it's a sair pity that it winna last lang wi' your lordship."

The earl, at this address, laid the papers on the table, and begged Andrew to be seated.

"What were you observing, Mr Wylie, about the money?" said his lordship, when Andrew had seated himself aloof from the table.

"I was just saying, sir, my lord, that twenty thousand pounds is a dreadful soom of money. It's a thousand pounds a-year, my lord, at merchant's rate, o' dead loss."

"It is so, Wylie; but what then?"

"Nae, as to the what then o' the business," cried Andrew, in some degree lightened in his spirit, "that's your lordship's look out. But I canna bear to see an honest gentleman riding helter-skelter straight on to a broken brig, and no gie him warning."

"This is at least something new," said the earl to himself, a little interested, and with a kindly excitement of sensibility towards his friend; and he then added, "I am certainly obliged to you, Wylie."

"Ye're nane obligated to me," cried Andrew, "it's the part o' honest to let you ken the road ye're in, as Burns says to the lady, 'O would ye tak a thought on ye', for really, my lord, I'm wae for you. A man o' your degree can neither work nor want, and what will become o' you when a's gane to a'?"

I'll tell you what it is, my lord, before I would be hinging ae millstone about my neck after anither in this gait, I would take a rung, and thrash every ane o' your het and fu' flunkies out o' the house. Devil do me gude o' them, and o' the other clam-jamphrey that are eating you out of house and hall, but I would let them ken what twenty thousand pounds are in as many paiks! Sir, my lord, if ye'll believe me, there was no ae single ane o' a' that fool antic mob of latherons and merry-andrews, devouring the mains more here the ither night wi' their gallanting, that would gie your lordship a bawbee for auld langsyne, if ye were seeking your meat frae door to door in a cauld winter's day, wi' the drap at your neb, and the tear in your ee, and no ae handfu', no even a cauld potatoe, in your meal-pock."

"The picture is strong," said the earl emphatically; "but it is not without some true portraiture. What would you advise me to do?"

"It would be out of a' bounds o' discretion for me to advise your lordship," replied our hero. "I'm only speaking o' what I would do mysel'; but then I'm neither a lord nor a married man."

"Yes, Wylie, yes; you are right. The lord and the married man are two serious considerations," said the earl a little pensively.

"Ane of them," cried Andrew, briskly, is bad enough; but the twa make a case that would puzzle Solomon himsel'. However, sir, my lord, I can tell you ae thing, and that is, redde the ravelled skein wi' my leddy, and aiblins baith you and her will can spare some o' the cost and outlay that ye're at for living furniture, the eating dishes and drinking decanters that ouer often garnish your table."

The earl's colour went and came during this speech; his eyes, at the freedom of the allusion to Lady Sandymford, flashed with indignation, but it was only for a moment. When Andrew paused, his countenance was settled, and he said in an easy tone. "You have, I think, Wylie, but a poor opinion of my guests."

"The folk are weel enough; but, as your lordship cares sae little about them, I wonder how ye can be fashed wi' siclike."

"How do you know that I care little about them?" said the earl, half amused, but surprised at the remark.

"As the auld sang sings," said Andrew,

" ' Them that gant
Something want,
Sleep, meat, or making o' "

And ye'll excuse my freedom, sir, my lord; but I have seen, mair than once or twice, that your lordship was no in a vera satisfied situation, notwithstanding the merriment and daffing around you."

"How?" cried the earl, and bit his lips. "But, Wylie, what makes you suppose that there is what you call a ravelled skein between me and Lady Sandysford?"

The jocular tone in which his lordship uttered this sentence, was calculated to throw Andrew off his guard; but it produced no change in the earnest simplicity with which he was endeavouring to fulfil the orders he had received from his master, with respect to recommending economy to the earl.

"I meant no offence," replied Andrew respectfully; "but I thought the best way for your lordship to begin to retrench, would be by trying to do with as little company as possible; and, if my leddy might be brought to the same way of thinking, it would be a blithe thing for you baith."

Andrew paused, for he observed a cloud passing over the earl's expressive countenance, and a mutual silence for some time ensued; during which, his lordship rose and walked towards the window. Our hero also left his chair, and was standing on the floor to make his bow of leave, when the earl turned round. "Wylie," said his lordship playfully, "can you speak of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall?"

"It's no right o' your lordship," replied Andrew seriously, "to make a fool o' the Bible, by likening me to King Solomon, the wisest man that ever was in the world; so I wish your lordship a vera good morning. But hae ye ony thing to say to Mr Vellum anent the twenty thousand pounds?"

"What can I have to say?—I wanted the money—he has got

it—and I doubt not has made the best bargain in his power; so take back the papers, and tell him to prepare the deeds.”

“Sir, my lord,” cried Andrew, petrified, “ye hae never lookit at the papers.”

The earl smiled, and stepping towards the table, gathered them up and counted them; he then placed them in Andrew’s hands, and said, “I have looked quite as much at them as I wish to do.”

Andrew shook his head as he received the papers, and for a moment looked compassionately at the earl. There was something in the motion and the look that produced an electrical vibration at the heart of his lordship, and as our hero moved towards the door and retired, he followed him with his eye; and even after the door was closed, still he continued for several minutes to gaze in that direction.

“I have hitherto lived among machines,” said the earl, in soliloquy, moving from the spot, and throwing himself carelessly on a sofa; “but this is a human being; it has brains, in which thought rises naturally as water-wells from the ground, the wholesome element of temperance; it has a heart too; and in this little discourse has shown more of man than all the bearded bipeds I have ever met with. What am I to him, that he should take such brotherly interest in my desolation? and how should he know that it is caused by my wife? My wife!—What wife?—I have no wife; scarcely so much of one as Othello had when he had slain the gentle Desdemona.” And in saying these words, his lordship rolled his head over towards the back of the sofa, and covering his face with his handkerchief, lay seemingly asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ACCIDENT.

THE Earl of Sandyford was an only child. In his fifth year, he had succeeded to the family honours and estates. The

countess, his mother, was one of those kind of respectable ladies, who, at their exit from the stage of life, are declared, in the obituary of the newspapers, to have been of the nature of pearls and precious stones--ornaments to their sex. Her husband bequeathed to her the principal direction of his son's education. The young lord was the last of his immediate line, and, in the event of dying without issue, the estates and titles devolved on the remote descendant of some collateral ancestor. The dowager felt it no less her duty, on this account, to cultivate his affections for the domestic virtues, in order that he might be early induced to form a suitable matrimonial connexion, than to provide all the proper and requisite means for the development of his talents and the formation of a character, which, she was persuaded, would reflect lustre on his country.

With this view, his education was entirely domestic; but conducted by masters eminently qualified, till he reached his sixteenth year, when he was sent to college. The countess, at the same time, assiduously preserved an old intimacy with the Avonside family, the daughters of which promised to excel their mother, who had been one of the most celebrated beauties of her day, and whose many amiable qualities were far dearer in the recollection of her friends, than the charms of her person, or the graces of her manners. She died while her children were all young; but in the marquis, their father, it was thought they had a wise and excellent protector. Unfortunately, however, after her death, he devoted himself, as he said, entirely to public business, and left them in the hands of hired instructors, who were only anxious that they should be distinguished for the elegance of their external acquirements.

In the course of this intimacy, the countess had, in due time, the satisfaction to observe that Lady Augusta, the eldest, began to interest the youth in the education of her son; and it soon became an understood thing, among the respective friends of the two families, that, when his lordship came of age, a marriage would, in all probability, take place.

We shall not dwell on intervening circumstances; Lord Sandyford, at college, was allowed to possess talents of a very high order. The most sanguine expectations were formed of

him by his acquaintance; but some of them differed as to the department in which he was likely to excel. The ambitious, who judged of him by his occasional animation, predicted that he would exalt the political renown of his country; but those who most esteemed the milder movements of his character, cherished the hope, that his genius would add to her more permanent glory in the quiet pursuits of a literary life. Both parties were equally disappointed.

Lady Augusta Spangle was in many respects the reflex of her accomplished lover. She was not only endowed with great beauty, but an education, conducted with admirable skill to bring out all the showy portions of her character in their fairest forms and liveliest colours, had adorned her with many elegancies, almost as fascinating as that charming simplicity with which Nature delights to set at defiance the graceful endeavours of art. She was not witty, nor did she possess any of that sunniness of mind, which beams out in the smiles of good humour; but her apothegms had often the force of wisdom, and sometimes the brilliancy as well as the barb of satire. It was impossible to see her without admiration; but there was a systematical *jeu d'esprit* in her deportment, which diminished the delight that her singular beauty was naturally calculated to inspire.

She had, in fact, been educated for the market of fashion, and, deluded by the sordid maxims of Mrs Harridan, to whom the care of her youth had been unfortunately entrusted, she believed that the main object in the life of a young woman of rank, is to obtain an establishment becoming the dignity of her family. "Men," as that antiquated artificer of manners would often say to her pupils, "are all either mercenary or capricious; and the daughter of a duke, if she is not rich, and few of them are so, has no chance of marrying according to her condition, unless she render herself interesting to the vanity of such noblemen as can afford to indulge their fancies in the choice of a wife." Lady Augusta gave credit to her precepts, and was their victim.

It might have been thought, considering how soon it had been determined that Lady Augusta was destined to be the bride of Lord Sandford, that Mrs Harridan would have relaxed in her efforts to form an artificial character, which, if she

had possessed any true judgment of the world, she must have perceived could not fail in the end to excite the aversion of the earl; but her system was neither to make homes happy nor wives amiable. She had an interest of her own to serve; and, actuated by the same mercenary motives as the music-masters whom she employed, was only solicitous about the effect which her pupils might produce on their appearance in society. The eclat of a splendid general deportment she knew would redound to her own advantage; and for this she neglected to cultivate those gentler graces which constitute the true strength of female dominion.

One thing, however, resulted from her system; but perhaps it depended more on the effect of individual feeling, than as a necessary consequence of the plated virtues which she so assiduously polished. The desire to obtain approbation quickened the sense of shame, and gave it even a morbid acuteness. To this feeling Lady Augusta was nervously alive; and where there is shame there may yet be virtue.

The day after Lord Sandymore came of age, the marriage was celebrated; but before the honey-moon had half waned, it was evident to the most cursory visiter, that his lordship had imbibed some secret cause of distaste against his beautiful bride. By the end of the third month, to the amazement of all the world, he was wildly running the career of dissipation.

The dowager, his mother, was broken-hearted by this unexpected result, and her distress was consoled in the usual manner by a number of sympathizing friends, not all females, who, in their malicious consolation, often remarked, that after all, sooner or later, men will indemnify themselves for the restraints laid upon their youth; and that the good old way of letting young fellows sow their wild oats was evidently the best, as it was doubtless the result of practical wisdom and experience. "We therefore," said these honourable personages, "do not despair yet of seeing Lord Sandymore pull up, and turn out a very shining character." Nothing, however, was farther from the charity of their hopes; and several years passed away, without any thing arising to make them doubt that his ruin was irretrievable.

In the mean time, no apparent change had taken place in the elegant deportment of the countess. She was still radiant with beauty, and the splendour of her accomplishments was acknowledged through all the constellations of fashion. Her prudence also received its due share of commendation; for, notwithstanding the enigmatical career of her lord, she still preserved with him the conjugal decorum of living under the same roof. But, except on those occasions, when it was necessary to exhibit the plate and hospitality of the family, they seldom met; still maintaining, however, towards the world that well-bred reciprocity of civility, which justified their acquaintance in asking them to the same parties on the same card.

One night, as her ladyship was returning home from the opera, her carriage, in crossing from Picadilly into Berkley Street, ran against a gentleman who happened to be passing at the moment, and seriously hurt him. The stranger was Mr Ferrers, one of the most eccentric orbs then above the horizon of fashion. This gentleman, in his youth, was ardent and generous, quick in his resentments, easily offended, and frank in his pardons; but there was a versatility of humour about him, which prevented him from making friends, and, as he advanced in life, the career which he ran tended to impair his best qualities. The succession of anxieties which he suffered from the turf and the hazard-table, excited a false appetite for acute sensations, and all pleasures seemed to him vapid that were not flavoured with a mixture of apprehension and even of danger. His losses sharpened his feelings, and his success was a spur to his infatuation. This distempered state of excitement had, at the period of which we are speaking, attained a degree of frenzy; and although in manners the unhappy man conducted himself like the generality of the circle in which he moved, he was already touched with madness. His insanity, however, had not manifested itself in any instance of remarkable extravagance; but the currents of his mind and thoughts were troubled and impetuous, and frequently tempestuous gusts, and whirlwinds of rage and passion, urged him with a headlong rashness in his pursuits, whatever they happened to be. As often, however, as he attained possession of his object, the paroxysm immediately

subsided, and he paused, as it were, and looked round, as if he stood wondering at what could have instigated him into such precipitation and violence.

During the period that he was confined to his room by the accident, Lady Sandysford, with whom he had no previous acquaintance, frequently sent to enquire for him; and the effect of this natural, indeed, under the circumstances, indispensable politeness, inspired him with a frenetic enthusiasm of gratitude towards her ladyship; insomuch, that when he was in a condition to mix again in society, he sought her out in all places with an impassioned zeal that belonged alike to his mental infirmity and his character; and he was so open and singular in this, that he soon attracted the eyes of the world towards him.

The countess was a neglected wife; but such had been the pride of her carriage, that no man had ever ventured to address her with one improper expression; and such the sustained dignity of her deportment, that no circumstance had yet occurred to require the slightest exertion of the latent powers of her own mind. She was, however, struck at last with the assiduities of Ferrers; and having a distinct perception of the shattered state of his understanding, instead of repelling or rebuking his pertinacity, she stooped, if the term may be allowed, with a compassionate condescension, which, contrasted with her usual cool and collected demeanour, begot surmises prejudicial to her honour. These, for a time, were only to be met with, like rare coins that serve for counters at the select whist-tables of the fates of reputation; but at last they got into general circulation among the small change of scandal at the club-houses.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PARAGRAPH.

ON the morning preceeding one of Lady Sandysford's grand winter parties, as the earl was sitting alone in the library, after

he had just finished his breakfast, and thrown himself back in his chair with his feet on the fender, nursing such aimless fancies as float in the haze of an imagination clouded by ennui, an incident occurred which precipitated the crisis of his conjugal disease. It was the custom of the servants in the hall to dry the wet newspapers with a smoothing-iron, which not only did the business expeditiously, but gave them the lustre of the hot-press. It was also as regularly their custom to inform themselves of what was going on in the world, before taking in the papers to their master and mistress. By this, a paragraph that pretty plainly accused the countess of infidelity was discovered. In order to preserve peace in the house, it was suggested by one of the footmen that it would be as well to burn it out, as if by accident, with the smoothing-iron. This was done, and the paper carried in to his lordship.

In this obliterating operation a portion, however, of the parliamentary proceedings was destroyed; and little interest as the earl took in them, or indeed in any earthly concernment, he could not endure a disappointment; the bell, in consequence, was rung sharply, and another copy of the paper forthwith ordered.

The tone in which this command was delivered alarmed the servant who received it, and he communicated his opinion to his companions, that their master had certainly, notwithstanding their contrivance, made out some of the defaced paragraph, and therefore it would be as good as their places were worth, to equivocate any more in such circumstances; another paper was accordingly procured, and presented to his lordship.

There was an air of embarrassment in the appearance of the footman who carried it in, which struck the keen eye of his master. He seemed to hesitate as he laid it on the table, and to linger in the room; insomuch, that the earl ordered him to retire.

The interest which had been excited in reading the parliamentary debate had, during this little interruption, subsided. Instead of turning to it again, his lordship carelessly allowed his eyes to wander over the small talk in the fashionable depart-

ment, and the first paragraph that caught his attention was the one which alluded to the infidelities of Lady Sandyford.

He read it twice over emphatically—he rose from his seat and walked to the window—he then returned, and read it again. Happening to glance over the page, he saw that it was exactly on the back of the passage in the debate which had been burned out. “These rascals,” he exclaimed, “are acquainted with the guilt of their mistress, and it was no accident that occasioned the burning of the other paper.”

His first movement was to call in the servants and question them on the subject; but in the same moment he reflected on his own carelessness as a husband, and withdrew his hand as it was stretched towards the bell-pull—mortified with himself that the sense of honour should make him hesitate to vindicate his conjugal rights. In this crisis the countess entered, and his lordship rising abruptly, moved towards the door, as if he had resolved not to speak to her; but before turning the bolt, he paused and said, with an agitated voice, pointing to the newspaper, “Your ladyship will find an interesting paragraph among the scandalous innuendos of the day;” and in saying these words, he hurried out of the room.

The countess hastily seized the newspaper, and on looking at the paragraph, suffered an inexpressible feeling of humiliation; her pride was laid prostrate, and she sat for several minutes in a state of stupefaction; for she was conscious of never having been guilty of any levity, and had taken no small merit to herself for the dignity with which she had endured, at first, the spleen, and subsequently the negligence, of her lord. In the course, however, of a few minutes, she recovered her self-possession, and ringing the bell, directed cards to be instantly issued, to inform her friends that her assembly for that night was deferred. With equal decision, she at the same time ordered the carriage, and drove to Mrs Harridan’s, for the purpose of taking her advice.

On reaching the residence of that lady, she was at once admitted by the servants; but on entering the room where their mistress was sitting, she perceived, by the cool ceremony of her

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reception, that Mrs Harridan was already acquainted with the fatal paragraph; a short preface, in consequence, served to introduce the object of her visit.

"I hope," said Mrs Harridan, calmly, "that there is no real foundation for this slander; but, at all events, my dear Lady Sandysford, it is not an affair in which I can with any propriety interfere. Besides, now that things are so public, it would be highly improper in me, considering my situation, with so many young ladies of rank under my care, to be at all seen in the business. Surely you have other friends, more experienced in such sort of misfortunes, to whom you can apply with more advantage."

The countess looked at her with surprise and indignation, exclaiming, "You speak as if I were guilty! You throw me from you as if I brought infection with me!"

"Far be it from me," said Mrs Harridan, in the same quiet polite tone, "to suppose any such thing; but I am much too insignificant a person to take the reputation of the Countess of Sandysford under my protection."

"I thought," cried her ladyship, almost bursting into tears, "that I might, in any distress, have applied to you as to a mother."

"I trust," replied Mrs Harridan, "that when your ladyship was under my charge, you always found me such, and your conduct then was certainly irreproachable; but I cannot be responsible for the behaviour of ladies after they have entered the world. In a word, should the result of this unfortunate business prove prejudicial to your ladyship, it will not be the first instance of the kind that has confirmed me in the prudence of a rule I have long laid down, never to interfere in the concerns of my pupils after they have once left my house. I shall rejoice if your ladyship is acquitted of the imputation, but I cannot put to hazard the character of my establishment; and it is therefore with profound pain I feel myself constrained to put an end to our intercourse."

The countess was thunderstruck. She had never before been addressed in the plain language of a business mind, sordidly considering its own interests, and pursuing them in contempt of

all the sympathies and charities of social life. She rose from her seat, but trembled so much, that, unable to stand, she sunk back in the chair, and gave way to her tears. Her spirits, however, soon rallied, and wiping her eyes, she returned abruptly to her carriage, and drove directly home, where she dispatched a messenger for the Marquis of Avonside, her father

CHAPTER XX.

AN EXPLANATION.

The earl, on leaving the countess, walked into the square, with the intention of going down to St James's Street; but for the first time in his life he felt that indescribable embarrassment which is so often mistaken for shame. He shrunk at the idea of meeting the eyes of his acquaintance, conscious that they must have already seen the paragraph, and could not determine how he ought to act in circumstances so painful and unexpected. In the hesitation which these reflections caused, he happened to recollect that Mordaunt, a college companion, whom he had not seen for several years, had left his card for him the day before, and he instantly resolved to go to his lodgings, and consult him on the subject. Accordingly, instead of walking down Bond Street, he crossed into Hanover Square, and, by the back of St George's Church, went through the narrow passage leading into Saville Row; thus avoiding the great thoroughfares in his way to Sackville Street, where his friend lodged.

On reaching the house, and being informed that he was at home, he walked up stairs, unannounced, to the first floor. His appearance would have been a sufficient warranty for this liberty to the servant who opened the door, even had his person not been almost universally known throughout the three fashionable parishes, and especially in the vicinity of St James's Street. For, notwithstanding the dexterity and effect of dress and address in the adventurous knights of the order of expedients, there is

still an habitual and obvious source of superiority about the unquestioned gentleman, which all the various degrees of public servants intuitively recognize, and none more quickly than the landladies and domestics of lodging-houses, even though the stranger should be fresh from the country, and in the newest gloss of a suit made on purpose for the journey to London, by some worshipful dignitary in the corporation of the borough nearest his estate.

His lordship, on reaching the landing-place, flung the drawing-room door carelessly open. Mordaunt at the moment was writing, and being disturbed by the nonchalance of this intrusion, raised his eyes hastily, and did not at the first glance recognize, in the pale attenuated elegance of the man of fashion, the once vigorous and handsome rival of his boldest exercises. In an instant, however, he discovered who he was, and starting from his seat, took the earl warmly by the hands. His lordship endured the heartiness of the double shake for a few seconds with evident pleasure, but ashamed to show the sensibility that he felt, he abruptly pulled his hands away, and shook his fingers, as if they were tingling with the squeeze, saying, "I wish the gods had given you dryads' and fauns' hoofs for hands; you have positively bruised my fingers to jelly."

The manner in which this was said, had a cadence of affectation in it, which struck disagreeably on the ear of Mordaunt, and he looked for a moment at the delicate complexion and elegant emaciation of his friend, with a strong feeling of disappointment and compassion; but his kinder disposition returned upon him, and he exclaimed, "Heavens! Sandyford, what an altered being!" His lordship, with a drolling coolness, in the same moment examined Mordaunt curiously from head to foot, and with burlesque gravity, said, "These muscles are the growth of nocturnal rest, that hue is gathered from the morning sun, and that strength from many a stubble field and mile of hill and dale. Upon my honour, Mordaunt, you are the most perfect personification of the blessings of a country life I have ever seen—absolutely a rural allegory—Apollo fresh from the flocks of Peneus." He then paused in his railery, and taking Mordaunt, with the

sincerity of their old friendship, by the hand, added, I cannot express how delighted I am to see you, and to see you thus."

"And you thus, Sandyford," replied Mordaunt, recollecting the bright expectations which had once been cherished of his friend.

"I am indeed not surprised that you should be somewhat disconcerted, for I believe that I am a little spectrish; and it is certain that I have been long thought no more," said his lordship.

There was a degree of sensibility in the manner in which the latter part of this sentence was expressed, that vibrated to the generous heart of Mordaunt, and, without answering, he drew the earl to a seat, and resumed his own chair at the table.

"But," said his lordship, gaily, "these things must not be thought of in these ways. What may the business be that has brought you to town, from the peaceful shades, and the innocence of the groves?"

Mordaunt, equally desirous to change the conversation, which he saw troubled his lordship, said, "Matrimony."

"You are indeed a bold fellow to venture on a town-bred wife," cried the earl; "I really thought that the simple race of the swains had been extinct; particularly, as the poets have of late given them up, almost even in the way of rhyme. But you surprise me—who is the Chloe, that with ears more used to the sound of bells and the rattling of wheels, than to the singing of birds or of falling waters, has captivated the gentle Damon?"

"Matters are not quite so pastoral with us as that," replied Mordaunt. "The nymph is an old acquaintance of your own, Julia Beauchamp."

"The beautiful Julia!" exclaimed his lordship with unaffected emotion, recollecting that he had not seen her since his own ill-fated marriage; but he suppressed the remembrance, and said, with animation, "The faithful loves then do still reside among the sylvan bowers." But this play of fancy memory again interrupted, and presented the image of Lady Sandyford, in that glowing beauty which had first charmed his youthful affections, when he beheld her in the graces of her virgin years,

bounding like the fawn amidst the stately groves that surround the venerable magnificence of her ancestral home—contrasted with the condition into which she had fallen, and he suddenly paused, and remained some time silent.

"You are indisposed, Sandysford—what is the matter?" said Mordaunt anxiously.

"I am only thinking," replied his lordship, "that there cannot be a fitter moment for communicating some notion of the comforts of matrimony, than when a man is on the verge of the precipice—Pshaw!—I must speak out. You are here, Mordaunt, at that moment of all my life in which I stand most in need of a friend—a friend such as you are. Have you heard any thing about Lady Sandysford?"

"My lord!" cried Mordaunt, in extreme astonishment.

"The lapse of the countess," continued his lordship, "affects me little; but according to the maxims of that old rascal, the world, the business has become so public, that I must interfere. Nothing is bad in London so long as it is unknown, and this affair is so notorious, that it is very bad—O, shockingly bad! But do not listen to me with such a look of strange wonder—astonishment is now quite obsolete, nobody submits to do any thing so simple. Do assume a virtue, though you have it not, or I too shall forget myself. In a word, Mordaunt, I had not been long married when I discovered that Lady Sandysford was deficient in the most essential quality of a wife—the heart."

"Who is the seducer?" said Mordaunt, emphatically.

"Pray, don't be so tragical, I beg you won't," cried the earl, to disguise his own emotion. "You consider this affair too sentimentally. Believe me, I have been long indifferent about the woman. I wish out for a good reason to be well rid of her society—my respect for her family, as I shall of course say to the world; but to deal more plainly with you, my own conduct will not allow me to do more. Besides, the disgrace of a public exposure would break the proud heart of her father, nor can I make money by the dishonour of my wife."

His lordship then proceeded to tell his friend, that, soon after his marriage, he discovered that the whole mind of Lady Sandy-

ford was bent on the figure which she herself would make in society, by which she had disgusted his feelings and embittered his existence. That, giving way to the poignancy of disappointment, he had rushed into the follies of the town, which, however, instead of alleviating the irksomeness of his condition, only exasperated his reflections, and drove him, with redoubled frenzy, into a fresh career of dissipation; during which the countess pursued her own triumphant self-exhibition, and reached the summit of her ambitious vanity.

"I thought," said his lordship, "that pride, if not virtue, would, however, have preserved her; but she has fallen; and, as in all similar cases, the husband is among the last that hears the news."

He then related the incident of the burned newspaper, and the paragraph.

Mordaunt agreed, that from so public a circumstance there must be some grounds for the suspicion, and recommended that the servants should be examined.

"But," said the earl, "even were she guilty, I do not mean to institute any process for a divorce. Your head, however, is cooler than mine, I will be guided by you."

"Ah, my lord!" cried Mordaunt, "do not say to me that you can regard with indifference the misfortunes, far less the dishonour, of a beautiful woman, to whom you were at one time so passionately attached."

After some further conversation, it was arranged that Mordaunt should immediately go to Lady Sandford, and that the earl should, in the mean time, remain in Sackville Street, and wait the result of the interview.

While Mordaunt was absent on this interesting mission, his lordship sat for some time reviewing, with no favourable construction to himself, the rapid perdition of so many years of the best portion of his life. In the course of this reckoning, he blamed himself still more than in the morning, for the precipitancy with which he had, in a temporary fit of spleen, endeavoured to cancel the affection which he had cherished for his lady, and the folly of casting himself so thoroughly away, on account of a disappointment which it would have been more

manly to have mastered. "But," said he, "it is never too late to mend, and the sooner I begin the change the better."

In the same moment he seated himself at Mordaunt's table, and wrote a note to Mr Vellum, requesting him to bring, on the following morning, a statement of his affairs. This was requisite, in order to enable him to regulate his generosity with respect to a settlement on the countess; and it was also required with a view to his own future conduct; for he was well aware that he had deeply encumbered his estates, and that, before he could enter upon a new course of life, it would be necessary to abridge the prodigality of his household. The writing of this note to his solicitor was, perhaps, the only decisive step he had taken for a number of years, and he felt, when it was done, something analogous to that glow of satisfaction, enjoyed by the strong or the bold after a successful exertion of strength and dexterity.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EVENT.

WHEN the countess, after her return from Mrs Harridan, had sent for the marquis her father, our hero had occasion to call at Sandyford-House from Mr Vellum. Her ladyship having inadvertently given no orders to be denied, he was shown into the room where she happened to be then sitting. A visit from Andrew was little in accordance with the state of her feelings, but she received him as usual; he soon, however, discovered that something was the matter, and said, "I'm thinking, my leddy, it's no vera convenient for me to be here, so I'll just go awa' at ance—but I hope my lord's weel, and that it's no ony thing anent him that's fashing your ladyship."

The publicity of a newspaper paragraph, and the familiarity with which Andrew was treated, removed any delicacy that might otherwise have been felt by the countess on the subject,

and she replied, "No; stop where you are;" and she then explained the cause of her anxiety."

"Really, I dinna wonder ye're vext," said our hero; "but every body kens the newspapers live by the clecking o' lees; and I think, before you or my lord gie them either credit or consequence, it would be as weel to sift the truth o't. I'm, as ye ken, my leddy, but a novice; howsomever, aiblins I may be o' spark o' use in this; so I'll get at the bottom o' the clash, an it be for nae mair than to show my gratitude for the great ceevilities that I am beholden for, baith to your leddyship and my lord," and he instantly rose to go away, saying, jocularly, "Keep a good heart, my leddy, a foul lie is no so durable as poek-mark; it can be dighted off."

"True; but the stain it leaves behind," said her ladyship, with a sigh.

"A snuff o' tobacco about stains; your leddyship's character's as a gauze gown or a worm web, to be spoilt with a spittle, or any other foul thing out of the mouth of man." And in saying these words he took his leave, with that customary bob of the head which served all the purposes of a graceful bow.

The moment that the countess mentioned the paragraph, he had recollected that there was a young man in one of the newspaper offices, of the name of Nettle, of whom he had some slight acquaintance; and it occurred to him, that by his means he might be able to reach the author of the slander. This Nettle had been educated with a view to the pulpit, but his disposition being loose and satirical, his father sent him to study the law under John Gledd. At the end of his apprenticeship, Nettle, according to the practice of the profession, went to Edinburgh, to complete his studies in the office of a writer to the signet, where he mingled with the swarm of minor wits that infest the Parliament House, and being naturally clever, acquired a taste for polite literature, and sharpened his talent for satire. He possessed an amusing and lively fancy—indeed, so lively, that it proved prejudicial to himself; for while it rendered his company exceedingly diverting, it made him dislike his business, and in the end threw him upon the streets of London, a mere literary adventurer. In this state he fortunately obtained em-

ployment as a reporter; and at the time when our hero came to London, he was not only in considerable reputation as such, but was also a general contributor to most of the metropolitan periodical works, particularly the reviews, in which the pungency of his wit was more remarkable than the soundness of his judgment. Our hero had brought an introductory letter to him from their old master; but he soon saw that the habits and disposition of Nettle were not congenial to that sober system of perseverance which he had laid down for the government of his own conduct.

On quitting Sandyford-House, Andrew went directly to the office where Nettle was employed, and it happened to be that of the very paper in which the mischievous paragraph appeared; in fact, the paragraph had been penned by Nettle himself, who, having accidentally heard something of the rumours in circulation respecting Lord and Lady Sandyford, formed, in his own imagination, a complete and plausible conception of the whole intrigue in which it is supposed her ladyship had been engaged; and when, from the ordinary channel, he received an account of the preparations for her party, he was in consequence tempted to write the paragraph, in order to anticipate a denouement, which, according to his notions, would necessarily take place soon, perhaps in the course of that evening.

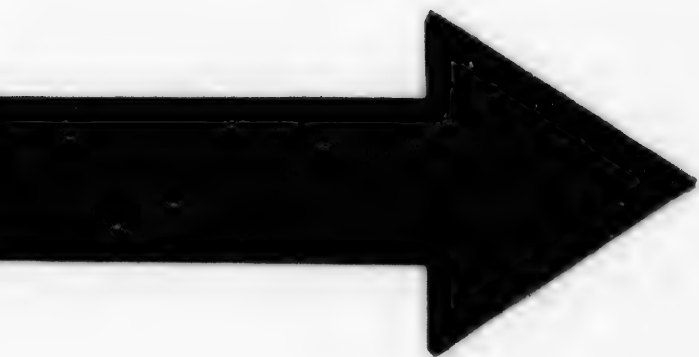
Andrew had some difficulty in gaining access to Nettle, nor was he admitted until he had sent notice that he wished very earnestly and particularly to see him, "on business of the uttermost importance."

"Well, and what's this business of the uttermost importance that you have got with me?" said Nettle, laughingly.

"It's a thing wherein your helping hand, Mr Nettle, can be o' a great sufficiency," replied Andrew, sedately. "My master, Mr Vellum, has one Lord Sandyford for a client, and something has been put out in the papers this morning concerning his leddy, the whilk is like to breed a terrible stramash."

Nettle was instantaneously smitten with the horrors of a prosecution for a libel, and the satirical mirthfulness with which he had received Andrew, was turned into anxiety.





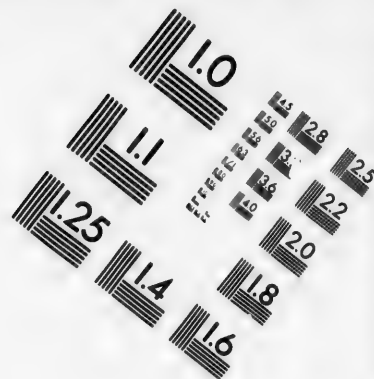
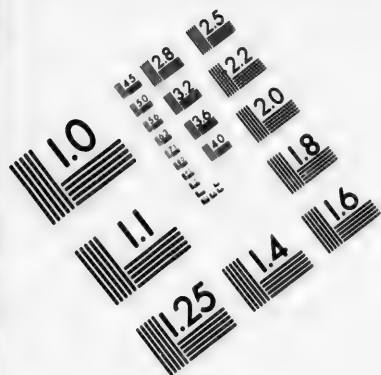
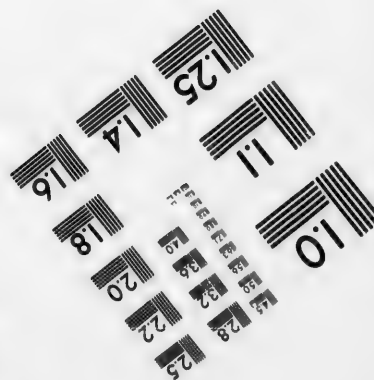
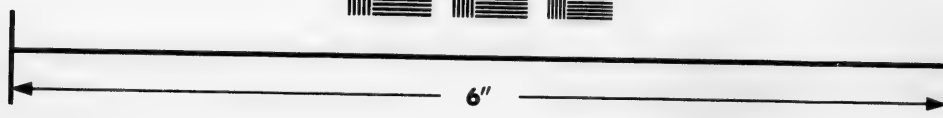
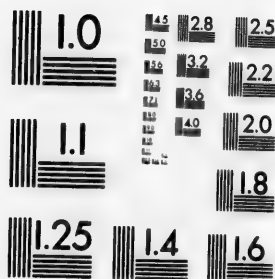


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"Indeed!" he exclaimed, "what is it; what has it been about? in what paper has it appeared?"

"I can tell you naething o' a' that," said Andrew; "but I would gie a plack and a bawbee to ken the author. Noo, Mr Nettle, as ye're acquaint wi' a' the jookery-cookery of newsmaking, I thought that aiblins ye're in a capacity to throw some light on the subject."

Nettle was alarmed and disconcerted. It was of no less importance to him, that the object of our hero's visit should be concealed from his own principals, than that the author should remain unknown to the offended parties.

"But are you sure, Mr Wylie," said he, "that the paragraph alluded to applies to Lady Sandyford?"

"It surely does that," replied Andrew, "or it wouldna hae been so kenspeckle."

Nettle requested Andrew to wait till he could find the paper, to look at it, but in reality to gain a few minutes for consideration.

"The paragraph is, I see, in our paper," said Nettle, returning with the paper in his hand: "but it does not apply to Lady Sandyford. It can only have been supposed to allude to her ladyship, by having followed the account of the preparations for her assembly."

Andrew, on looking at it, saw that this explanation was feasible; indeed that, without the context, it was a very harmless pasquinade; and he observed, "But it's been an awfu' mistake, Mr Nettle. Is there no a possibility of an explanation?"

"O yes!" cried Nettle gaily, relieved from his apprehensions, by perceiving the harmless nature of the paragraph when considered by itself; and aware that, if the matter should ever come to any legal issue, it would be in his power to plead the advertisemental account of the preparations, by producing the original paper from which it was taken, and arguing that the paragraph was a separate and distinct communication. "O yes!" he replied, "it is easy to remove entirely the impression produced by this mistake: but Andrew, ye should know that folks in London cannot afford their time for nothing; and that

characters, like other things, when they are bought must be paid for."

"Very true, Mr Nettle," said our hero dryly; "and when they are stown, the thief maun not only make restitution, but may be made to suffer punishment."

Nettle looked at Andrew, incredulous to his own ears, not having previously conceived him possessed of any such acuteness; and his newly recovered self-possession was completely overset, when Wylie added, "I fear and doobt, Mr Nettle, that ye ken mair about this than ye let on; and I would council you, as a frien', to put your shoulder to the wheel, and get out o' the mire, and on your way rejoicing, wi' a' the speed ye dow. For if there's to be ony compounding about this black job, it will hae to come frae your side—but I say naething. My betters will judge for themselves. If you hae brewed gude yill, ye'll drink the better. A lie's a lie ony hoo, Mr Nettle; and a leddy o' quality's name is no to be blotted wi' newspapers' ink wi' impunity; so ye'll just comport yoursel', Mr Nettle, as ye think right."

The reporter, finding he had not the simpleton to deal with that he had supposed—for his first idea was, that the countess might be willing to pay handsomely for an effectual contradiction of the slander—he changed his tune and said, "You have misunderstood me, Mr Wylie; all I meant was, that before this unfortunate mistake gets into the other papers, I could by my influence stop it; but, as it must be at some expense to them, and loss of time to me, I trust it will be considered."

"Considered?" cried our hero, indignantly; "a flail to the laitheron's hurdies. Mr Nettle, I suspect and believe that your han's no clear o' the coom o' this wark. Get it wash't—get it wash't, or it may be dried wi' a hempen towel."

And so saying, he left the office, where the astonished Nettle, who had not deemed him many degrees above idiocy, stood enchained to the spot. No time, however, was to be lost. In the course of the briefest space possible, Nettle was round to all the other offices, and got the scandal not only strangled, but even paragraphs inserted, which had the effect of turning the suspi-

cion, so pointed against Lady Sandyford, entirely in another direction. But to her, however, the mischief was done.

The business, on which Andrew had been sent to Sandyford-House, was not of any very pressing importance, and he was sensible that he had already greatly exceeded his time; but confident that the service in which he was engaged would excuse a much greater trespass, instead of going from the newspaper-office to Mr Vellum's chambers, he went directly back to Sandyford-House, and reached the door at the same time with Mordaunt, who, slightly glancing at his insignificant appearance, regarded him as some tradesman's messenger, and was not a little surprised when he was ushered, along with himself, into the library. The countess was up stairs with her father.

"You belong to the family, I presume?" said the country gentleman, with an accent of interrogation.

"I canna just say that," was Andrew's answer; "but I'm concerned for them."

Mordaunt knew not what to think of his companion, and looked at him for a moment with an expression of the most ineffable scorn; but the oddity of Andrew's appearance almost instantly reversed his feelings.

While they were thus conversing, the Marquis of Avonside's carriage, which had driven round the square, drew up at the door, and immediately after his lordship handed the countess in, and, taking his place beside her, was instantly conveyed home. The servants in the hall were at no loss to guess the motives and complexion of this proceeding; and one of the footmen, as soon as the carriage had left the house, informed Mordaunt of what had taken place. Andrew, on hearing this news, recollected the old proverb, that no good was ever got by meddling between man and wife; and prudently resolved to escape immediately from the scene of action.

"Will ye, sir," said he to Mordaunt, "be pleased to tell my lord, that Andrew Wylie was at the newspaper-office, and found out there that the whole tot of the story about my leddy's fox-paw, is just the clishmaclaver of a misleart reporter, and he needna fash himsel' any mair about it."

"May I ask, sir," said Mordaunt, supposing that Andrew be-

longed to some of the newspapers, which at that time were chiefly in the hands of Scotchmen, "with what paper you are connected?"

"Me connectit with a newspaper!—Na, na, sir; I'm of an honest trade—I'm learning to be a writer wi' Mr Vellum, a very respectable solicitor in Lincoln's Inn. Only I hae been doing a bit job between han's for my leddy."

Mordaunt was still more at a loss than ever to comprehend the office and character of our hero, and would have entered into a conversation with him more particularly relative to the newspaper; but Andrew was apprehensive that he had already gone too far with a stranger, although, by the manner in which Mordaunt conducted himself towards the servants, he perceived that he considered himself on terms of intimacy with their master. Under this impression, he therefore moved hastily to the door, without replying to a question concerning the paragraph; and, with a curious and significant look as he turned the bolt, said, "I wish you a vera gude morning."

CHAPTER XXII.

NEGOTIATION.

WHEN the earl was informed by Mordaunt that the countess had left Sandyford-House with her father, he immediately returned home, accompanied by his friend. Soon after this Sir Charles Runnington called; and, on being shown into the library, where they were still standing, he made a low and very formal bow to the earl, and then stated that he was commissioned by his noble friend, the Marquis of Avonside, to enquire what his lordship had to allege against the conduct of Lady Sandyford.

The earl, as well as Mordaunt, was puzzled by the narrow and almost technical ground which the marquis had taken; but

his lordship replied, "The countess herself best knows for what reason she has quitted her home."

"Upon that point," said Sir Charles Runnington, "I have no instructions."

"Then," cried the earl, sharply, "the only answer I can return is, let her ladyship say what she wishes me to do, and it shall be instantly done."

"If I understood Lord Avonside clearly," answered Sir Charles, "he is averse to any formal separation; and the countess is not in a condition at present to come to any determination."

"Every thing rests with herself," said Lord Sandyford, with emotion. "I have nothing to desire, but that she may find more happiness elsewhere than I fear she has done with me. I cannot at this moment say what it is in my power to allow her for a separate establishment, but to-morrow I shall. Assure her that"—He could say no more, but bowed to Sir Charles and left the room.

"This is a most unfortunate affair," said Mordaunt.

"But not unexpected, I understand," replied Sir Charles. "Her ladyship's family have long been aware of her situation."

"Indeed!" cried Mordaunt; "and how is it that Sandyford was never informed? Who is the paramour?"

"Paramour!" exclaimed Sir Charles, with indignation. "This is adding cruelty and insult to the wrongs which she has already suffered. Lord Sandyford knows that there is no guilt on her part; she has long been the victim of his negligence, and her reputation is blasted by the consequences."

"This is dreadful!" cried Mordaunt. "Do you mean to say, that although the levity of her conduct has been so notorious as to become the game of a newspaper pasquinade, that her husband is entirely to blame?"

"Sir," replied Sir Charles, formally, "I did not come from my noble friend, her father, to enter into any controversy on the subject. The earl agrees to a separation; and, from his known character, I doubt not the arrangement will be completed in a satisfactory manner. I must confess, however, that I have been

surprised at his emotion; he seemed much more affected than I could previously have imagined."

"The character of my friend is, I find, not well known," said Mordaunt; "but I hope the separation will not be final."

"After what has taken place, and the experience they have had of each other, it is the best thing that can now happen," replied Sir Charles. "But his lordship will no doubt feel that it is due to his own honour to investigate the newspaper calumny, and to bear testimony to his conviction of his injured lady's innocence."

"Is there no chance of our being able to effect a reconciliation if she is innocent?"

"I will take no part in any proceeding having that for its object," said Sir Charles. "My noble friend the marquis assures me, that Lady Sandysford is one of the worst used wives in the world. I rely on his lordship's honour and integrity for the truth of the statement; and with that impression I should deem myself base, indeed, were I to recommend any thing so derogatory as the measure you suggest."

Sir Charles then left the room, and Mordaunt went to the earl in his own apartment.

Sir Charles Runnington was a political adherent of the Marquis of Avonside, and had been employed in several diplomatic missions, in which, it was said, he showed great self-command, and upheld the dignity of his sovereign with all propriety, but none of his missions ever were successful. The parliamentary adversaries of the marquis said, that this was owing to his inability to understand the spirit of his instructions; but it could never be shown, that in any one instance, he did not adhere, with a most surprising constancy, to the letter. Besides this political connexion, he was related to the countess by her mother; on which account the marquis had requested his interference. But although no man could well be really less qualified to manage any affair of delicacy to a favourable and conciliatory issue, Sir Charles possessed many external attributes, which may be termed the minting of a gentleman—the marks which designate the coin, but convey no idea of the intrinsic value and purity of the metal. He was grave and fair spoken—precise in his language, erect in

his carriage, neat in his dress, and his hair always powdered and arranged exactly in the same manner as he wore it when first introduced at court.

On returning to the marquis, he gave his lordship a very circumstantial account of what had taken place with the earl, and also of what had passed with Mordaunt.

Although this report was the precise truth as far as it went, yet it conveyed no idea of the manner in which his lordship had been affected; and even what was said, suffered in the repetition, by the cold medium through which it was conveyed.

The marquis was, in some points of character, not unlike Sir Charles, but he was older; and what was precision in the one, approaching to pedantry, was sedate pomposity in the other. The accident of happening in the outset of life to be successful in the management of some of those trifling parliamentary matters that the ministers of the day are in the practice of assigning to the hereditary supporters of government, he was taken with the conceit of being a statesman. In the deliberations of the senate he always took a part, and talked long, and said as little to the purpose as any other speaker on either side of the House. But, notwithstanding the prosing inefficacy of his public conduct, he was upon the whole what is called a steady character—uniformly voting with every successive batch of ministers, and never asking more than a reasonable share of official patronage. In private life he was punctual and honourable; and although he never said a witty thing, nor understood a wise one, he possessed many of the most respectable traits in the domestic character of an English nobleman. It is needless, however, to add, that he was nevertheless not at all fitted to act the prudentest part in the peculiarities of his daughter's situation.

He communicated to the countess a faithful account of what had passed; but his narrative was still more deficient in conveying a true impression of what had taken place, than even that of Sir Charles; insomuch that her ladyship's humiliation was greatly augmented to find that her husband was seemingly, as it appeared to her, so glad to be rid of her on her own terms. She said, however, nothing, but requested to be left alone; and the moment that her father had retired, she gave vent to her

feelings in long-continued weeping. This greatly relieved her mind, and she was able afterwards to reflect calmly on her situation. She recalled to mind some of those inadvertent sarcasms in which the earl first manifested his dislike of her passion for what he called self-exhibition, and the artificial equality of her manners, which he sometimes peevishly derided as hypocrisy; and she was sensible that there must have been some error in her system, since it had failed to interest, or rather since it had served to disgust, the only man whom she really cared to please.

The behaviour, too, of Mrs Harridan had taught her also an important lesson. In the course of their short interview that morning, the sordidness of her art had been so plainly disclosed, that it necessarily produced a deep and a resentful impression. Lady Sandyford could not disguise to herself the practical illustration which it afforded of those maxims which she had been instructed to respect as the essential principles of fashionable life, as if there were any thing in fashion that could be at variance with the ties and charms which constitute the cement of society.

The conflict of these reflections had an immediate effect on ladyship's mind; and from that hour she resolved to act another part, more agreeable to her own original nature and character. The rock was indeed now struck; and the stream that was to spread freshness in the desert of her wedded life, began to flow.

Her first inclination was to return immediately home to her husband, and express to him frankly what she thought and suffered; but this a false pride prevented her from doing, even while she confessed to herself that she had been too rashly induced by her father to abandon the conjugal roof.

The marquis was obliged, or rather so felt himself, to attend the House of Lords that evening; he was indeed anxious to take a part in the debate, chiefly to show how lightly he considered the derogatory predicament in which his daughter had been placed. Sir Charles Runnington was at the same time instructed by his lordship to go round the club-houses in St James's Street, in order to inform the most distinguished male gossips of those fraternities, that the separation of the Earl and Countess of Sandyford, so far from being occasioned by any imputed guilt

on the part of her ladyship, was sought by herself, and advised and sanctioned by her father.

When the marquis returned in the evening, he found the countess alone in the drawing-room, comparatively at her ease, and attended by Flounce, her own maid. As he had made what he deemed an able speech, although it contained neither fact nor argument to illustrate the expediency of the measure he endeavoured to advocate, he was on excellent terms with himself, and complimented the countess on the fortitude with which she sustained herself. But instead of replying to him in the same strain of good-humour, she briefly told him that she was arranging with Flounce to quit London next morning; and that it was her intention to go at once to Elderbower, the seat of the dowager Lady Sandysford, her mother-in-law.

"Is your ladyship of a sound mind in this determination?" exclaimed the marquis, in his oratorical manner. "Do you not expose yourself to a most unwelcome reception?—Reception, did I say?—It may be a repulse?"

"No matter," replied the countess, in a calm, firm voice, "I will make the attempt. If I stay here, or if I go to any of my own relations, I lend colouring to the slanders in circulation against me; but if I take up my abode with the mother of my husband, and I am sure she will receive me kindly, the malice of the world will be rebuked and silenced."

The countess perceived that her father was not satisfied with the resolution she had taken; but as it was the most expedient, indeed the best which at the moment she could adopt, this gave her no pain, and she soon after wished him good-night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PERPLEXITIES.

DURING the remainder of the day after the countess left Sandysford-House, the earl continued uneasy, irritable, and thoughtful.

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Mordaunt dined with him, and in the evening he began to rally a little; but in the midst of his jocularity, for he was naturally disposed to indulge his fancy in a humorous play upon the passing topics of the moment, he would suddenly fall into fits of abstraction, from which he as suddenly recovered himself, as if awakening from a trance of which he had been unconscious. His friend saw his mental struggle, and exerted himself in every possible manner to draw him from the pressure of his unhappy thoughts; but all his efforts proved unavailing, and he at last said, "Sandyford, this will not do; you cannot, I perceive plainly, meet this event with that indifference which you have affected, and which you are so strangely ambitious as to endeavour still to maintain, even before me."

"I confess it," replied his lordship; "and I should have borne it even more weakly had Augusta been really guilty; but how can I invite a reunion, when that old mandarin, Sir Charles Runnington, declares my own behaviour has been such, that her friends, as well as herself, are desirous of the separation? Now, if I had thought she cared half the value of an odd trick for me, or even could but have cared, I would have been a very different sort of a husband. However, the Rubicon is passed; but one thing at least I may still try, and that is to prove that I am not altogether the irreclaimable Don Juan which the world so charitably supposes."

The manner in which this was said, though generally in a tone of freedom and gayety, had yet an accent of sadness that moved the compassion of Mordaunt, and he contemplated the endeavoured cheerfulness of his friend, as he would have looked upon a sleeping infant covered with a lace veil—a sight which, notwithstanding the health, the smile, and the bloom that shines through, often suggests melancholy associations to the affectionate heart.

"I think, Sandyford, you would feel yourself better, were you to be more communicative," said Mordaunt. "There can be nothing in your situation that a friend may not know."

"True," replied the earl; "but a man seldom chooses his friend to be the confidant of his sins. I have been worse, perhaps, than you imagine, though I believe not quite so bad as the

world has represented me. But I have done enough of ill to know that the task I undertake is not only to make a character, but to recover one. However, let us bid adieu to the gloomy pile of my concerns for the present, and tell me, Mordaunt, something of your own—the affair with Miss Beauchamp. When is the wedding to be?”

“Why, to say the truth, my lord,” replied Mordaunt, laughingly, “although it is a settled point between us, there is yet a great impediment to be overcome. The baronet, her father, it seems, many years ago, when Julia was but a child, made a compact with his neighbour, the late Mr Birchland, that she should be married to Jack Birchland, then quite a boy; and if Birchland will take her, he swears nobody else shall have her.”

“Ah, me! for aught that ever I could learn, the course of true love never did run smooth,” cried his lordship; “and Birchland will be a cursed fool if he don’t, begging your pardon.”

“Ay, but there are two words to a bargain—Julia has something herself to say in the business,” replied Mordaunt.

“Then Birchland is really inclined to stand by the compact?” said the earl.

“I’m half afraid he is; and, what is more, Julia herself has some suspicion of the same sort.”

“Now, I understand the whole affair,” exclaimed the earl, laughing and interrupting him: “you are come to London to meet her, and a stolen match is in contemplation.”

“You are mistaken,” said Mordaunt, somewhat gravely; “Miss Beauchamp will not submit to any thing so derogatory to herself; but it seems that her cousin, Letitia Irby, has taken a fancy for Birchland, and our immediate object is to make them man and wife, and by that means frustrate or defeat the pertinacious designs of Sir Thomas.”

“There are no such ingenious nest-builders, after all, as you birds of the bowers,” cried the earl, gaily; but checking himself, added, “the plot is good—very good—but how is it to be brought to a bearing?”

“Julia has persuaded her father to come to town,” said Mordaunt, “and Miss Irby is with them. They arrived this morning. Birchland is expected in the course of a few days.”

"Were Birchland one of our town-bred sparrows, and not a chaffinch of the grove, I should advise," replied the earl, "the pretty Letitia to coo for lovers amidst her native shades; but as I doubt not he is as guileless as a blackbird, no harm may come of their billing even in a London cage. However, we shall see."

Mordaunt, during this sally, looked seriously at the earl, and said gravely, "Your mind, Sandyford, I am sorry to see, is accustomed to regard lightly some things which you were once in the habit of considering very differently. Birchland were a villain, if he could take advantage of a fond girl's innocent affections."

His lordship blushed, and was for a moment out of countenance, but recovering his usual familiarity, replied, "You John Bulls of the country serve up your morality in the husk; a man of pleasure among you cannot taste a kernel, without being supposed to have cracked the Decalogue. That same word villain, is a whoreson phrase—dowlas, filthy dowlas,"—but he added, in a tone so deep and emphatic, that it made the heart of Mordaunt vibrate in sympathetic anguish, "The word, however, suits the action, but, in using it, I suppose you forgot at the moment what my wife and her friends think of me."

Mordaunt for several seconds was unable to make any answer, and then he added, "Your whole life, Sandyford, has been a riddle. The town term of it has distressed all those who esteemed you, and who cherished expectations which you were once able to realize."

"I am still able," cried the earl, with a generous confidence in his own powers; "but the jade must go to grass. I intend, with all convenient speed, to settle my townly affairs, and then begin another course of being at Chastington-hall—an elysium, as my mother has often told me, where the manes of my ancestors, in the shape, I suppose, of old portraits, would scowl their brave encouragement on my emulous endeavours to revive the faded lustre of their blood. But to that, like to many other of the good old dowager's saws and sayings, I have been no better than the infidel. However, I am resolved for a time to take up my abode at Chastington, and by the post to-day I sent orders to prepare for my reception. Were you not so engaged, I would

ask you to go with me, for I believe it is a huge old Ann-Radcliffe place, a spectrey surrounded by a rookery, which I was on the point at one time of selling on account of its distance from town, and the red-haired bumpkins, that came up from it occasionally to see London, and to keep their lord and lady in hot water, and their fellows in the hall in laughter, all the time they stay."

Mordaunt smiled at the latter reason for parting with the ancestral residence of all the Sandfords.

"Upon my honour," said his lordship, "there is more truth in it than you think. You can have no conception how much we were plagued by the sons of the patriarchal fixtures of Chastington-hall, coming here to learn the craft and mystery of footmanry; and the worst of it was, that, after they were initiated in all the tricks of the trade, I was obliged to give them characters to my acquaintance, in the perfect conviction that any principle of honesty or sobriety, which they brought with them from the country, was entirely lost in this house. The possession of the place made me, indeed, feel as if I kept a roguery for the supply of the London market; and conscience, with a few secondary considerations arising from losses at play, urged me to part with it. But nobody could be found rich enough, or foolish enough, to make the purchase."

"Surely you have never seen Chastington," said Mordaunt, shocked that his lordship should think with so much levity of parting with a domain and mansion which, for many ages, a long line of noble ancestors had successively delighted to enrich and adorn.

"O never! A hundred and seventy miles from London, in a midland county—not even a market-town within half a score of leagues—only a village at the gate, with a single ale-house, where a cuckoo clock chicks at one side of the chimney-place, and the curate, smoking his pipe in an antique elbow-chair, churms at the other. Was it possible to vegetate with Lady Sandfords? I did, indeed, at our marriage, intend to make it our principal residence; but a blight fell upon all my intentions of that period, and I never since could endure the idea of looking at Chastington, till the adventure of this morning reminded

me of what my mother used to say about the presiding genii that inhabit there."

After some further general conversation relative to the earl's plans, Mordaunt rose to bid him good-night. "Come to me to-morrow as early as you can," said his lordship, as he shook him by the hand at parting; "and in the mean time put as charitable a construction as possible on any thing that may have had a tendency to lower me in your esteem. I am not, my dear fellow, half so bad as I have long seemed; all that which others regarded as the inebriation of pleasure, was to me the frenzy of a fever. My outward and my inner man were in afflicting opposition. The voluptuous thought that I was seen to swallow so greedily, was but drunk as an opiate to allay the mental agony which I suffered. I felt as if the spring and fountain-head of all my motives and happiness were cut off, and the future rendered an arid and devouring desert. A worm was in the core of my heart, and a fire in my brain; and for three years my spirit was parched with inextinguishable despair. My dissipation was martyrdom; and yet I wore the mask of a joyous libertine so well, that my hidden misery was never discovered. But the mask, Mordaunt, is now off—the crisis of my distemper is past—and, as the faculty say, a change of scene, with country air and exercise, will perhaps complete the cure."

During this address, which his lordship delivered with considerable energy, while he still held his friend by the hand, Mordaunt was greatly moved; and at the conclusion, when the vehemence of the earl had subsided into a more familiar strain, he said, "Sandyford, you ought to have told me what you were suffering. It was too much to put to hazard fame, fortune, and self-respect, without consulting any friend."

"It was," replied his lordship; "I am sensible it was; but if I could have been so prudent as to have taken the advice of any friend, I should not then have been so mad as to require it. There are states of the mind which friends should see are morbid, without being told. One of the worst symptoms of intellectual distemperature, is the effort which the patient makes to conceal his malady. Could it have been for a moment imagined by my friends, had they thought seriously on the case, that I would at

once forego all my early habits of emulation, the love of fame, and the desire of power, and tie myself to the chariot-wheels of hazard and sensuality without a cause? No, Mordaunt; when you heard of my falling off, you ought to have come to me. It was not for you to stand aloof, and see me perish; for, without vanity, I may now say, humiliated as I am by the sense of my fruitless talents and abortive life, that you at least knew my original worth."

The feelings of Mordaunt were overcome, and hastily bidding his lordship good-night, he rushed from the room to conceal the emotion he was unable any longer to control. The heart of the earl was relieved by what had passed; the fine natural elasticity of his mind, which enabled him to pass with such felicitous ease from one topic to another, dilated out in the cheerful anticipation of being yet able to redeem some portion of the promise of his youth; and he retired to his bed-chamber in a more serene and temperate mood than he had for several years enjoyed. The only anxiety he suffered was on account of his lady, and he sighed as he said, looking at her picture, which hung over the mantelpiece, "And so, Augusta, you are also gone. I thought but last night I could have better spared you. No matter, if you are happy. You have all the kindest wishes of a man that loved you too well."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

At the time when the earl had requested Vellum to be with him in the morning, the solicitor, punctual to the hour, was at Sandyford House, with a hasty sketch of the state of his lordship's pecuniary concerns. He had heard something of what had happened; but the true circumstances were so different from the report, that he could not help saying, "I presume there will be no proceedings."

"None in your way," replied the earl dryly, as he perused the statement; adding, "This looks better, Vellum, than I expected. Have you any account of my debts and mortgages?"

Vellum said, somewhat diffidently, that he had, and produced a paper. The earl, on looking it over, was surprised to observe that Vellum himself was by far the most considerable creditor. He took no notice, however, of this circumstance; for the money which he had borrowed at different times he had paid an enormous rate of usury; but he had never any reason before to suspect that Vellum was the real lender, nor did he do so at this time. He only thought, what was indeed the fact, that Vellum had afterwards bought up the securities.

While the earl was perusing the list, Vellum watched his eye anxiously, but could discover nothing of what was passing in his mind. On returning it to him, his lordship, however, said, somewhat emphatically, "Vellum, this is a black account: we must use our best endeavours to bleach the complexion of some of these ill-favoured items."

The solicitor felt the full force and weight of this remark, and said at once, "I am aware, my lord, that some parts of it are not exactly what your lordship perhaps expected to see—I allude to my own claims; but the truth of the case is simply this: Had I not redeemed the bonds which constitute my claim, some other would; and I do not think that any person into whose possession they might have come, would have been more delicate than myself. I might certainly, as your lordship's professional agent, have resisted the debt altogether; and, in that manner, the obligation to pay them might have been got rid of. But your lordship would never suffer me to establish a legal right at the expense of a moral wrong. I might also, my lord—for such things are not uncommon—have exhibited the claim under different names, by which my interest in the business would have been dissimulated; but I am incapable of submitting to practise any such equivocation."

"I am perfectly satisfied, Vellum, with your integrity as a man of business," replied his lordship; "and the candour of your declaration confirms me in the justice that I have uniformly, in my own mind, done to you as such. My confidence in you is

none abated, and I do not consider the profit which you may have gained by these dealings as procured at my expense ; but, doubtless, the only reason which induced you not to tell me that I might have occasionally redeemed the pound of flesh, arose from your thorough knowledge of the state of my circumstances, arising from your professional trusts as my agent."

Vellum bit his lips ; but the earl in a moment changed his tone, and said cheerfully, " However, the matter is done, and it must not be repeated ; I wish you all happiness with your gains ; and the sooner they are realized, the more I shall be content. But one thing you must, in the mean time, do for me. I have paid more attention to that Scottish curiosity, Wylie, than perhaps I ought to have done. He, however, served to amuse me when every other thing had become stale, flat, and unprofitable ; and he cannot but have formed some expectations from my interest or influence. I believe he is honest."

" It is impossible to doubt it," replied Vellum ; " but his talents are not of a high order, nor has his education been of the best sort."

" The being," cried his lordship, gaily, " has not half the capacity, I believe, of a young elephant ; but his very deficiencies have been as talents with me ; and now that I am determined to quit London, I wish to do something for him. You must take him into partnership, Vellum."

The solicitor was thunderstruck ; and in an accent of astonishment, said, " My lord, it is not possible—he is too young—he knows nothing of business."

" He is old enough," replied his lordship, coldly, " to receive profit ; nor does it require any particular knowledge to do so. But perhaps you would rather give him a salary."

Vellum bowed, and the earl continued ; " Then it should be on agreement for a term of years—Say seven. How much will you give him ?"

The decision of character which the earl had in this interview so unexpectedly manifested, overawed Vellum, who had hitherto considered him merely as a common man of fashion. He had never, in the course of their previous intercourse, once suspected the dormant powers of his lordship's mind, which, like

a stream long dammed up, and mantled over with water-weeds and rushes, seemed incapable of being applied to any effectual purpose. But he now perceived that it would be useless to parry with such a character; and therefore, with the off-hand alacrity of a man of the world, he replied, "It is your lordship's pleasure to promote the fortune of the young man, and it is my duty to comply with your lordship's reasonable wishes on the subject. I will give him five hundred pounds a-year for seven years; although I do not think he will ever make any available proficiency in his profession."

"You do not then seriously think that he is likely to attain eminence as a lawyer?" said the earl, earnestly.

"I do not," was the emphatic answer.

"Then," replied his lordship, "five hundred a-year, for seven years, is too little. You will give him seven hundred and fifty."

"It is far beyond his wants, habits, and ideas."

Vellum, in saying these few words, was rebuked by the grave expression of his lordship's eye; and stopping as if he had been interrupted, looked confused.

The earl, after a pause of some ten or twenty seconds, rose from his seat, and standing with his back to the fire, said to the solicitor, who had also risen at the same time, "I am not sure, Mr Vellum, that any man has a right to prescribe limits to another's fortune. You will give Mr Wylie seven hundred and fifty pounds a-year for seven years, if you think my business and connexions can, with a reasonable advantage to yourself, afford so much."

There was no withstanding either the manner or the matter of this. Vellum bowed with profound respect, and said, "It shall be done, my lord; and I ought to add, that it is in my power to comply with your lordship's request."

"I thank you, Vellum; you have obliged me;" and the earl took him cordially by the hand. "We shall talk no more of these matters. My only instructions now to you are, let a full account be made out, and sent to me as soon as possible; exhibiting an exact view of my affairs; with a table, showing in what time my debts may be discharged. I will take it with me

into the country, where I shall be able to determine the amount to which I must limit my expenditure."

This was evidently intended to conclude the interview; and the solicitor, sensible of the intimation, accordingly took his leave. In quitting the room, the earl, however, said to him, with his wonted freedom, "You can dine with me, I hope?"

Vellum accepted the invitation, but with a little more formality than usual. The earl smiled at the change, and added, in his most gracious and conciliating manner, "By the way, Vellum, this house must remain empty while I am in the country, for I do not intend that it shall be let; you had as well come here and live; you will take better care of the pictures and furniture than servants; and I hope you and Mrs Vellum will oblige me in this. You need not materially increase your establishment, as I shall leave some of the old servants."

Vellum looked on his lordship. On any former occasion, had such a proposition been made to him, he would have laughingly shaken his head in thankful acceptance; but the singular lustre with which the latent character of the earl shone out upon him, smote him with a sense of reverence that overpowered all his wonted familiarity, and he said, with the most profound respect, "I crave your lordship's pardon for having evinced any reluctance to comply with your request. I ought to have known better the obligations that I owe to your lordship, and the magnanimity of your disposition." He then said, somewhat less formally, but perhaps with more effect, "I am not, however, the only one, my lord, who has been long in error with respect to your lordship."

"Come, come, Vellum, no more of that," cried the earl, interrupting him; "I have myself, perhaps, been the most in error of you all. But as I have turned over a new leaf in the book of life, it is as well that the first record to be made thereon is what I shall not regret. Bring Wylie with you, that I may see with what humour the Caliban sustains his new fortune."

The solicitor bowed and retired.

CHAPTER XXV.

GRATITUDE.

FROM the transactions of the preceding day, Wylie had been thoughtful and anxious. He studiously avoided the conversation of his companions in the office, and applied himself with more than wonted diligence to his tasks at the desk. He had formed expectations with respect to the favour of Lord Sandyford, which he thought were likely to be frustrated by the unfortunate situation of the earl's domestic affairs, and ever and anon a cold feeling came over his heart, such as often saddens the spirit of the young adventurer when his prospects are suddenly clouded. Vellum, on his returning from his lordship, summoned him into his own apartment, and somewhat abruptly told him of his good fortune.

"It's vera kind of my lord," said Andrew; really it's vera kind. He's a nice man, and mair in him than he's likened to; I couldna hae thought he would hae done so meikle for me alane."

"Then you have expected," cried Vellum, "that he would do something for you?"

"I surely had reason," was the reply. "It couldna be thought but that in time I might hae ventured to ask my lord's helping hand, considering his discretion towards me."

"The idea did credit to your sagacity, Wylie," said Vellum ironically; "and I suppose you exerted yourself to the best of your ability to amuse his lordship?"

"Nae doubt I did—nae doubt I did that," cried our hero; "it would hae been an unco thing in the like o' me no to hae done a' in my capacity to pleasure my lord."

"Upon my word, there is more in you than I gave you credit for," replied the solicitor sneeringly, feeling as if he had been in some degree overreached by the part which Andrew had played; adding more sedately, "But now that you have gained your ends, and by his lordship's generosity are placed in a condition to support the appearance of a gentleman, I hope you will set in

seriously to your profession, and throw off your ridiculous manners for the future."

"That would be a doing, indeed!" exclaimed our hero; "when you are just at this precious moment telling me that they have already brought me in seven hunder and fifty pounds a-year."

This answer puzzled the lawyer, who laughed as he said, "Well, well, take your own way; but it is no longer necessary for you to be so penurious."

"That's very true," replied Andrew, "and I'm thankful it is sae; but if I dinna save now, where will I, in the lang run, be a whit the better for my lord's bountiful patronage? No, sir; ye maun just let me ride my ain horse wi' my ain ha'ding."

Mr Vellum suddenly broke off the conversation, and turned his attention to some matter of business, and our hero, on going to his place at the desk, in the fulness of his heart wrote a letter to his grandmother; but without indulging in any expression beyond the wonted temperance of his ordinary manner of addressing the affectionate old woman, he began by stating, that for some time he had been keepit thrang both by night and by day. "But I have no reason to complain, for Providence has been pleased to raise up for me a friend, by whose instrumentality Mr Vellum has settled on me a very satisfactory wage, the which will enable me to show more kindness to you than I have yet had it in my power to do; and I think it my loving duty to send you herein, out of the fore-end of my earnings, something to buy a new gown, or any other small convenience that ye may stand in the need of; hoping you will want for nothing, as I doubt not to have it in my power now to do as mickle, and more, from time to time." And then he continued, "I have seen of late but little of Charlie Pierston, but he's in very good health to the best of my knowledge, but a mischievous clever ramplor, and never devalds with cracking his jokes on me. However, I have fallen in, notwithstanding the unfashion of my apparel, with some creditable acquaintance; but as you ken nothing anent them, I needna fash you with their names, nor how it was." And he concluded by assuring the old woman, that it would be his honest endeavour to give satisfaction to his

friends, whoever they were, and to none more than to her, to whose care he was beholden for every thing but his being.

This letter afforded great delight to the old woman; she carried it round to all her neighbours, and even to the manse, where the minister declared his entire satisfaction with the affectionate disposition and the generous heart of poor Andrew.

"But," said he, "London is a very expensive place, so you must not count too confidently on his being able to fulfil his kind intentions: we might, however, have been better qualified to judge of that, had he told you the amount of his salary; however, upon the whole, you have great reason to be thankful. I believe he was always a well-disposed creature."

"That he was," replied Martha in the pride of her heart: "he's a wee gair, I alloo; but the liberal man's the beggar's brother, and there's aye something to get by key or claut frae the miser's coffer. I dinna stand in the lack o' his gift; but since it has come, I will buy a new gown for the kirk, that the whole parish may see Andrew's gudeness o' heart therein. Poor fellow!—nae doubt he has had baith to thole and moil for what he has gotten, and it's a world's wonder to me how he could gie sic a satisfaction. But naeboddy can tell what's in the shawp till it's shelt; Paul was lang a persecutor before he was an apostle, and the bonny butterflies begin the world in the shape o' crawling kailworms."

Thus was the character of our hero for affection and generosity established, amidst the scenes of his youth; and when from time to time a five-pound note, in faithful adherence to his promise, came regularly to hand, the worthy Tannyhill as regularly lauded the liberality of the donor, and predicted his future greatness; while the delighted old woman, exulting in the constancy of his kindness, as often declared, "That she never wished to see him great, but only gude; for, as Solomon says, 'grant me neither poverty nor riches;' and Solomon kent weel what the world is—though, poor man, in his auld days he gaed aften far ajee out o' the straight road in the gloaming, tapping wi' his gowden-headed staff at the harlot's door, and keeking in at her windows with his bald head and his grey haffits, when he should

has been sitting at home on his throne, reading his Bible to his captains and counsellors in a kingly manner."

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN ALE-HOUSE.

AGREEABLY to the orders of the countess, her father's travelling carriage was at the door early in the morning. The day promised to be fine. The winter had been mild; and although it was still February, the spring was seen big in the bud, and the fields seemed to be tinged with new verdure. A few lambs were scattered here and there among the flocks on the pastures; and the air breathed an invigorating energy into the spirit, of which Lady Sandysford stood then much in need. Every thing presented the appearance of youth and renovation; and the rising hopes of a richer harvest of pleasures in life, were in accordance with the appearance of nature, and the genial blandishments of the early year.

During the first three stages of her journey towards Elder-bower, she met with nothing to draw her attention from the contemplation of her own situation. Indignant at the world, and mortified with herself, her thoughts alternately glowed with anger and were darkened with sadness; but a general tendency to a more elevated course of reflection gradually acquired force, and her spirit rose as it were out of its passions and prejudices, like the moon ascending from behind the lurid glare, the smoke, and the dark masses of a great city.

When the carriage stopped to change horses at the Rose and Crown, in the village of Castle-Brookborough, her ladyship was roused from her reverie by the murmuring of a crowd round the door of a small public-house, on the opposite side of the way. There was something in the appearance of the people, which showed that their feelings and sympathies were excited by some distressing occurrence, and she enquired what had hap-

pened. Several voices, all anxious to engage her humanity, answered together, that a poor unknown outlandish woman had been taken in labour in the London coach, and, being left there, had expired in giving birth to a beautiful female infant.

It was not the intention of the countess to have halted till she had reached the end of her journey; but this incident had such a powerful effect on her newly-awakened sensibilities, that she immediately determined to alight, and make some arrangement for the preservation of the helpless child. The crowd were touched with admiration at her generous compassion, and made way for her to the door of the public-house, with a degree of reverence, mingled with delight, that came over her heart with an influence more delicious than the early odours of the spring; but no previous view of the privations of the poor had prepared her for the scene that she beheld on entering the house.

She was first shown into the kitchen, or rather the door opened into that apartment. It was a rude low-ceiled room, with a large chimney at the one side, in which a hospitable pile of roots and billets of wood were cheerily burning. In the one corner hung several hams and flitches of bacon; in the other stood a bench, somewhat dislocated in its limbs, with a high back, which bore a sort of outline resemblance to an old-fashioned sofa. Opposite to the fire was an inclosed recess, with an oaken table in the middle, carved with the initials of some favoured customers, and round it about six or seven labourers were seated, some with bread and cheese before them, others with tankards of ale; two or three of them were smoking. They rose as her ladyship passed across to a room, where a number of women and children were assembled; on entering which, her ear was pierced, and her heart penetrated, by the shrill and feeble wail of the new-born orphan.

She advanced towards the side of an humble bed, on which lay the body of the mother, still retaining that last and indescribable gleam of earthly beauty, which remains for a few minutes after the spirit has departed, and seems as if it were the reflection of the ethereal guest hovering in contemplation over the dwelling it has for ever quitted. An elderly woman was

respectfully composing the limbs, while another was dressing the child as it lay on her lap.

Lady Sandysford was exceedingly moved by a spectacle as new as it was mournful, and, obeying the shock and impulse of the moment, she hastily turned back, and ran across the street to the Rose and Crown.

"For heaven's sake!" she exclaimed to the landlady, who followed her into one of the parlours, "what is to be done with that unprotected infant?"

"Don't afflict yourself, my lady," replied Mrs Vintage; "the parish-officers will see to it. They have already sent for Mrs Peony, the wife of Mr Ferrers' gardener. Her own child died yesterday, and she will be right glad to get this one in its place. I would therefore, my lady, recommend your ladyship to take some refreshment, and compose your spirits. What will your ladyship be pleased to take?"

Flounce, her ladyship's gentlewoman and companion in the carriage, who had been during the whole time an amazed spectator of the countess's agitation, interfered, saying, "Perhaps my lady will be better by being left for a little alone;" and the countess intimating, by a motion of her hand, an acquiescence in this suggestion, Mrs Vintage withdrew.

"Flounce," said her ladyship, the moment they were by themselves, "I have a great mind to take this baby with us."

"O monstrous, your ladyship!" exclaimed the tender-hearted Abigail. "Why, the creature hasn't a stitch of clothes; and how could we nurse it in the carriage on my best pelisse? No, my lady; let the parish-officers first get it nursed, and then if it chance to be a beauty, your ladyship may show your compassion; but, Lord, if it prove an ugly bawling toad, what could be done with it?"

"There is some reason in what you say, Flounce," replied the countess; "particularly as to the risk your best pelisse might be exposed to. But, nevertheless, I will adopt the child; therefore, do you call in the landlady again, that I may speak to her on the subject."

Mrs Vintage, on returning into the room, was accordingly informed that the parish-officers need give themselves no further

trouble about the orphan, for it was her ladyship's intention to take it under her protection.

"But," said the countess, "I do not wish for the present to be known in the business. I must therefore beg of you to make the necessary arrangements with the nurse of whom you spoke, and in the course of a few days you will hear from me more particularly on the subject. In the mean time, I will leave with you what money may be necessary to defray the expenses of the mother's funeral. In order, however, that some key, if possible, may be got to her relations, I think it will be proper to take possession of any luggage she may have had with her."

Mrs Vintage told her ladyship that she understood there was nothing but a box, which the officers had already opened, and found it contained only a few trinkets and clothes. "I have taken charge of it, and, if your ladyship pleases, I will give it up to you."

"Yes," said Flounce, "I think if my lady is to be at the expense of the brat's education, she should have what effects belong to it; so pray, do let us have the box with us. I dare say, my lady, some of the trinkets must be valuable; for did your ladyship not observe what delightful large ear-rings the poor dead creature had? Surely they will never be so barbarous as to bury her with them. If they do, I should not be surprised were the sexton to dig her up in the night, and pull them out."

"Flounce," cried her mistress with displeasure, "you allow yourself to talk too flippantly. Desire the footman to see the box carefully put up with the rest of our luggage."

Her ladyship then gave Mrs Vintage some instructions respecting a slight repast; and while the preparations for which were going on, the requisite arrangements were made with Mrs Peony to take charge of the child, which the countess directed to be named Monimia.

During the conversation, it transpired that the Mr Ferrers, in whose service the husband of the nurse was gardener, was the same gentleman whose attentions to the countess had already produced such baneful consequences. He was lord of the manor

in which the village was situated, and possessed a fine ancient seat in the immediate neighbourhood.

There was nothing in this information which disturbed Lady Sandyford; for she was not aware that it was owing to the ridiculous assiduity of Ferrers that her unhappy situation with her husband had been brought to such a painful issue. Nevertheless, the remainder of her journey to Elderbower, the seat of the countess-dowager, was performed in silence; even Flounce said nothing, nor made any attempt to engage the attention of her lady, but, ruminating on the events of the day, fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DOWAGER.

ELDERBOWER had for generations been the appropriated retreat of the dowagers of Sandyford. It was a venerable whitewashed mansion, presenting a front of three gables, topped with stately ornamented chimneys, toward a smooth, well-shaven green, enclosed on the right and left by high walls, clothed with laurels and other shrubs of constant leaf and verdure. This lawn, or *parterre* as it was called, opened to the public road by a pair of iron gates of florid tracery, between two tall embossed and sculptured columns, on the tops of which stood a couple of grotesque statues, intended to represent Saxon warriors, the supporters of the Sandyford arms. These, in a boyish freak, while residing here under the maternal wing, the earl one day painted in the colours of the family livery, to place them on a footing, as he said, with their equally wise fellows in the hall; and his mother, from an indescribable sentiment of affection, yearly renewed their liveries; contrasting with sorrow the light and jocund gayety of the time when the frolic was first played, with the headlong dissipation that had succeeded.

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market town, near the rectory, and not far from the church; so situated, as his lordship said, in order that the dowagers might have the benefit of clergy in their felonies on the adjacent characters. But the insinuation did not apply to his mother, who was in many respects an amiable woman, though weakly overvaluing her rank.

When the bell at the gate announced the arrival of her daughter-in-law, she was sitting alone at a parlour window, which overlooked a flower-garden that sloped gently down towards a beautiful smooth grass plot round a basin, in the middle of which stood a naked leaden male image, intended for a heathen god, but whether Apollo or Vulcan, was never thoroughly or satisfactorily determined. His reverence the rector, who had once acquired some knowledge of such things at Oxford, was of opinion that the statue was an original cast of the Farnesian Hercules; but the traditions among the domestics and of the environs, described it as the effigy of Sir Gondibert le Saint et Forte; who, on account of his great valour, obtained the redoubtable surname of Hardknocks—a most valorous and courteous knight that was taken by the Pagans and flayed alive at Jerusalem, in the time of the Crusades.

But however questionable the character might be which the image exhibited, or whatever controversies existed with respect to its origin, it certainly poured from a conch a copious stream of crystalline water, which fell in a gentle and ever-rippling shower on the surface of the basin, and spread into the quiet air around a sober murmur, that softly harmonized with the tranquillity of the scenery, and the golden composure of the setting sun, which the old lady was then contemplating, with her elbow resting on a large prayer-book, in which her spectacles marked that she had been recently reading the collects prescribed for the evening. Shock, her lapdog, lay slumbering on the rug, with his head comfortably pillowed on the breast of Pur, a large, demure, and decorous tortoiseshell cat, that was also enjoying at full length the drowsy influences of the bright blue-tinged fire, which, like the splendour of the western skies, gave an assurance of continued clear and dry weather. Shock was disturbed in his siesta by the sound of the bell, and starting up, ran barking towards

the door ; while his lady, taking her spectacles out of the prayer-book, placed it on a table behind her, on which, amidst several volumes of a devotional character, lay a copy of the newspaper containing the paragraph that completed the rupture between her son and his wife. It may therefore be easily imagined with what emotion she beheld the countess, unannounced, enter the room ; and, almost in the same moment, felt her in tears on her bosom.

"Alas !" said the venerable matron, "what is this ? and why have you come to me ? But I pity you more than I can express ; for I fear that the conduct of George afforded too just a palliation."

"Then you have already heard what has happened ?" cried the countess, in some degree recovering herself. "Whatever may have been my indiscretions, I am at least, my dear mother, free from the imputed guilt. Lord Sandysford and I have long lived a comfortless life. He has treated me as if I were unworthy of his affection, and perhaps I have acted as if I felt none for him. This public scandal has opened my eyes to my faults ; and I have come to you to learn how I may recover the esteem of my husband. My father urges me to a formal separation. He did indeed persuade me to remove with him from Sandysford House. It was a rash step, but it is taken. Instruct me how it may be redeemed."

The dowager dropped a tear on the hand which Lady Sandysford had, in her earnestness, laid upon her knee, and said, "I thank you, Augusta, for this confidence ; but I feel a mother's sorrow for George. His ruin is, I fear, now complete. But endeavour to compose yourself, and we shall consider, at leisure, what is the best course to pursue. You have done wisely to come to me. The knowledge that you have taken refuge here, will do much to remove that unfavourable construction towards you which the world, taught by the fatal newspaper tale, will doubtless put on the separation."

The maternal anxieties of the old lady as to the manner in which the earl had acted in the business, received some alleviation from the countess's report of Sir Charles Runnington's mission, and she said, "Thank heaven, his heart is not entirely

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corrupted, nor his principles destroyed! I hope he has still good feeling enough, were it once effectually excited, to work out a gracious change in his conduct. If he could once be convinced that you are solicitous to regain his affections, his ruin may be arrested; for, whatever his behaviour may have since been, he once, Augusta, undoubtedly loved you truly."

The benign composure of the dowager had an immediate and tranquillizing effect on the mind of the countess, who, in the course of less than an hour after her arrival, was able to discuss with her the plan that she had formed in the hope of regaining the esteem of her lord. The dowager would have written the same night to request the presence of the earl, that their reconciliation might be immediate, but the countess would not permit. "No," said she, "I do not wish that we should come again together, unless there can be a reciprocity in our tastes and sentiments. I feel my own insufficiency at present to contribute to his happiness."

The old lady affectionately interrupted her, saying, "You have too humble an opinion of yourself."

"Ah!" exclaimed her ladyship, "humility is to me a new feeling. I cannot disguise to myself that, with all my former vain pretensions to superiority, I have failed to preserve the love of a man that once doated upon me. Perhaps I have even been instrumental to that woeful lapse which has so long embittered your declining years."

The tone of contrition in which this was expressed, surprised and grieved the venerable dowager. She beheld the character of Lady Sandysford in a point of view of which she had formed no previous conception; and there was a modesty in this, which, while it moved her compassion, solicited encouragement. She saw that the countess felt more deeply the stigma to which she had been exposed than could have been expected from a woman hitherto considered as equally under the dominion of pride and vanity.

By this time it was almost quite dark; and such had been the earnestness of the conversation between the two ladies, that the one forgot the fatigue of her journey, and the other, to ask if she required any refreshment. Far different was the case with

Flounce: she was prattling away with delight over a dish of green tea, along with the methodical Mrs Polisher, who held the responsible dignity of housekeeper at Elderbower; repaying the civility of her entertainer with a full, true, and particular account of the infidelities of the earl. "I declare, my dear ma'am," said Flounce, "he is the most shockingest man you ever heard of; and more times than I shall tell, he has shown his cloven foot to me. But, my lord, says I, I would have your lordship to know, that if my lady submits to your raking, I wont. Really, Mrs Polisher, you make excellent tea; but I suppose the water is very good in this here countrified place—and then his lordship would laugh and make game of me—pray, do give me a morsel of sugar—dear me, whet charming cream—a little more—I protest it's beautiful—I never tasted such delicious cream—and this is such a pretty house—I guess, however, you must be dullish, keeping no company; and I should think my lady will not stay long. I fancy when the divorce is finished, we shall have one of the earl's other seats to live in."

"Divorce!" cried Mrs Polisher in amazement; for she had not yet heard, notwithstanding all Flounce's talk, any thing of the separation—"Divorce! what do you mean?"

"Why, haven't you heard that my lady has been caught in a denoomang?"

Mrs Polisher, an old respectable matron, started back from the tea-table, exclaiming, "Not possible!"

"As to the possibility of the thing, that's neither here nor there," said Flounce, sipping her third cup; "but the story's all blown abroad, and our men read it in the newspapers; but being a delicate affair, you know I could not speak of it to my lady herself; but it's in the newspapers; so there can be no doubt of the fact. Indeed, my Lord Avonside came and took her away out of the house, and I was ordered to follow in the evening. Then there was such a piece of work—really, Mrs Polisher, this is prodigious fine hysson—a small knob of sugar, if you please. But, you know, it does not do for us servants to make or meddle in these sort of matters—so I said nothing, because my place is a very good one. I wonder, however, what your dowager thinks of the business."

"Thanks!" cried Mrs Polisher, indignantly—"it will break her heart; and I am astonished that your Lady Sandford should dare to show her face in this house; but these sort of creatures are as impudent as they are wicked."

At this moment the dowager rang the bell that summoned Mrs Polisher, and Founce was left, for a short time, to her own meditations, or rather to her observations; for the moment that the housekeeper's back was turned, she immediately began to inspect every thing in the room, with the avidity of an intended purchaser. But before she had completed her survey, an old corpulent footman, who was lame with the gout, came in to enquire for his young lord, as he called the earl.

"Don't talk of his lordship to me," cried Founce, "he's a naughty man, and 'tis all his fault."

"I won't believe a word on't, said the man, who had heard something of the separation from the servants of Lord Avonside that came with the countess; adding, "before he fell in with your damned lady"——

"My damned—O, monstrous!—But the fellow's a bumpkin," said Founce, with a most ineffable toss of her head; and she then added, "Sirrah, if you know what it is to have good manners, you will bring in a light, and take none of these liberties with me." Thus asserting and upholding her metropolitan superiority.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN ATTEMPT.

MORDAUNT, soon after Vellum's eventful interview with the Earl, called at Sandford House, to represent, in the strongest terms, to his lordship the misery that he was evidently bringing upon himself; but he found him inexorable.

"Had Lady Sandford not quitted the house," said his lordship, "thereby leaving me under an impression of her guilt, or

what I regard almost equally bad, in total carelessness whether I considered her guilty or innocent, I might perhaps have been induced to reconsider her situation, but I cannot now. Her conduct confirms me in the justice of the opinion I have been unfortunately taught to form by her behaviour, ever since our ill-fated marriage. She is incapable of caring for any one, and the only pain she will feel for what has happened, is the damage that has perhaps been done to her own reputation."

Owing to a long debate in the House of Commons the preceding evening, the newspapers were late in being issued that morning, and the earl, engaged with Vellum, had neglected to look at them. At this crisis of the conversation, however, his lordship, in folding up a note, happened to throw his eye on the paragraph ingeniously inserted by Nettle, to turn the attention of the scandal-mongers. It stated the extreme regret of the editors and proprietors, that, by one of those inadvertencies inseparable from the haste with which a daily newspaper was necessarily compiled, a paragraph relative to the elopement of Mrs C—— with the gallant Colonel D—— had been so placed in connexion with an account of the Countess of Sandyford's assembly, as to induce some of their readers to think it applied to that amiable and noble lady—"a mistake which they could not sufficiently lament, even although assured that it had only occasioned a great deal of merriment to the earl and countess, who were every thing enviable and exemplary in married life."

His lordship burst into a fit of laughter, exclaiming, "There are really no such fictions as those of your contemporary histories;" and he handed the paper to Mordaunt.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried the honest country gentleman; "Is it satire?"

"O dear, no!" replied the earl; "the editors and proprietors suspect they have got into some scrape, and are taking this method to appease the offended enviable exemplars, meaning Lady Sandyford and myself, of whom, it would appear, they know about as much as they do of the political intrigues and transactions which they illuminate and chronicle with so much seeming sagacity."

"Monstrous!" cried Mordaunt; "I had no such conception of the licentiousness of the press."

"The only thing I am surprised at," said the earl, "is, that the amend should have been made so expeditiously."

"But who is this Mrs C—— and Colonel D——?" cried Mordaunt.

"Who!" exclaimed the earl; "I declare you cooing lambkins and capering doves of the azure fields are such innocents, that there is no speaking to you about any townish matter, without entering into details obnoxious to all inventive genius. Who, in this case, can Mrs C—— be, but the celebrated Miss Fibby Fiction, the eldest daughter of my Lady Fancy, a personage of great repute and influence in the scandalous world; as for the gallant colonel, depend upon't, he is no other than that fine, bold, swaggering blade, who, it is well known, has been long the declared adversary and rival of your country neighbour, Mr Simple Truth."

"And yet by this, which you think an invention, has your domestic happiness, my lord, been sacrificed?"

"Softly, Mordaunt," said the earl, "not so fast—my domestic happiness has not been so maltreated by the Flamens—these priests of Mars and Bellona, as I consider the newspapers—the heart and bowels were consumed on the altar of the Eumenides long ago. But I cannot divine who has taken the trouble to interfere so expeditiously."

Mordaunt then told his lordship of the conversation which he had held with Andrew, describing the singular appearance and cunning simplicity of our hero.

The earl was struck with the information, and exclaimed, "It is impossible that Wylie could have contrived any thing half so ingenious as this paragraph. But I will sound the bottom of it immediately."

In the same moment his lordship rung the bell. Wylie happened to be then at the door, coming to thank him for his kindness; and the servant who answered the bell announced him.

Andrew, from the moment that Vellum had communicated to him the generous interference of the earl, had undergone an

intellectual transmutation. An irresistible sentiment of gratitude arose in his heart, so strong and powerful, that it became as it were a principle of duty; and actuated by this hallowed and gracious feeling, without reflecting on the impropriety of obtruding on his lordship, at a time when a more worldly head would have concluded that the earl was not likely to be in a humour to receive him, he went to Sandyford House.

On entering the library, he was struck with the change in his lordship's mien and air. Instead of the quiet smile of intellectual indolence which his lordship usually wore, his countenance was lighted up; and there was a quickness in his eye, and a precision in his manner, that disconcerted the self-possession of our hero.

"How is this, Wylie!—here already!" said the earl, surprised at his sudden appearance.

"I am come to thank your lordship," said Andrew, modestly. The earl was as much astonished at the diffidence with which this answer was expressed, as Andrew himself was at the exactitude of his lordship's question. Mordaunt looked on, curiously examining them both.

"Say nothing about thanks, Wylie," cried his lordship. "I hope what Mr Vellum intends to do for you, will be repaid by your endeavours to give him satisfaction."

Andrew replied, still diffidently, "The will's hearty, my lord, but the han's weak; I hope, howsomever, that your lordship will let me do something to oblige yoursel', as weel as Mr Vellum."

Desirous to avoid the promptings of our hero's gratitude, the earl interrupted him, saying, "Pray, can you tell me how this got into the newspaper?" showing him the paragraph.

Andrew read it over studiously, and then said, "My lord, this is glammerie;" and he then explained to the earl, that he suspected it was a device to obviate the effect of the former paragraph.

Mordaunt was surprised at the sagacity of the seeming sim-
pleton. His lordship was no less so; and, pleased with the coincidence with his own opinion, loudly expressed his approbation of the conjecture.

Our hero then related what had passed between him and Nettle; adding some reflections of his own, calculated, as he intended, to lighten the importance which he supposed the earl attached to the paragraph. "They are a wheen wily gles in this town," said he, slyly looking from under his bent brows. "Though it's a hang't lee, my lord, I hope the tae half o't will be true, and that you and my leddy"——

The earl's countenance changed, and Andrew shrunk tremblingly from the stern rebuke of his eye; but Mordaunt, who saw the well-meant presumption of the observation, interfered and said, "You are quite right, Mr Wylie; and you could not better show the sense of obligation, which you seem to feel towards his lordship, than by wishing, as you do, a reconciliation with the countess."

Lord Sandford felt offended with Mordaunt for the freedom with which he addressed himself so openly on so delicate a subject, and to so young a man, and one, too, of our hero's condition.

Andrew, however, was encouraged by this interposition, and said, "Odsake, my lord, ye maunna flee up at ony thing I say; for it would be an ill return for your lordship's goodness, and the discretion I have had at my leddy's han', were no I to ettle my best"——

"Peace!" cried the earl. Andrew looked round to Mordaunt, coweringly and jocularly, as if in dread of a castigation.

"You might at least hear what Mr Wylie has to say," cried Mordaunt. "Kindness at all times merits civility."

"Well, and what has Mr Wylie to say?" exclaimed the earl, a little contemptuously, looking at our hero, who was, however, none daunted by his manner; but, on the contrary, urged by gratitude and the encouragement of Mordaunt, replied,

"I didna think your lordship was sic a spunkie—ye'll no mend your broken nest, my lord, by dabbing at it. So, out o' the regard I hae baith for you and my leddy, I would speer what for ye put her awa'?"

The earl, confounded by this category, almost laughed, and cried, "Why, thou paragon of animals, she went away herself."

"Poor body!" replied Andrew, "ye maun hae used her very ill, my lord?"

This was said in such a manner, that Mordaunt and the earl looked at each other. He saw their astonishment, but took no notice of it, continuing, "She was a fine leddy—maybe a wee that dressy and fond o' outgait—I'll no say she was entirely without a fault, for we a' hae our faults, my lord—and I'm in a great ane to speak wi' this freedom to your lordship; but when I think what ye hae done for me—I was a friendless lad, and ye took me by the han'—and could I sit still and see scathe befall my benefactor, I wouldna be a stirk o' the right stock that's bred on the lan' o' Scotland."

There was something in this approaching to energy; insomuch, that the earl said, "I am much obliged to you; I thank you for the interest you take in my happiness. It does honour to your feelings; but you will oblige me by saying no more on the subject."

The manner in which his lordship spoke was at once mild and firm. It admitted of no reply, and it offended no feeling. It neither made our hero sensible that he had transgressed the limits of decorum, nor that he ought to regret what he had done; but it effectually closed his lips, and he rose to take his leave. The earl said to him, as he was on the point of retiring, "I intended to have had the pleasure of seeing you with Mr Vellum before leaving town, but that I find will not now be convenient. Make my compliments to him, and say, that he will have the goodness to send the papers I want to Chastington Hall, as I have determined to set off early to-morrow morning."

Andrew, with humble respectfulness, and more emotion than his lordship deemed him susceptible of, then withdrew.

"I am glad to be rid of the fellow," said his lordship, as the door shut; "we should have been in heroics, with handkerchiefs at our tragical eyes presently; and as I do not think the Scottish dialect is at all sufficiently sonorous for blank verse, don't you think, as a matter of taste, it was right to send him hence? I am sorry, however, to have been so peremptory with him. The gods play with our hearts as shuttlecocks. Here is a woman

that I did not believe had life to feel even an insult, has gone off a flaming seraph, reddening with hostility—and an unlicked thing—becoming at once the noblest work of God—startling my baser humanity almost into tears.”

During the time that his lordship was thus speaking, he continued walking up and down the library. Sometimes he addressed himself to Mordaunt; but, for the most part, what he said was in soliloquy, and he was evidently deeply agitated; at last he made a full stop, and said, “I am really persuaded that this young ‘Edwin is no vulgar boy.’ There is much virtue in that awkward simplicity of his; for it begets negligence towards his talents, and that negligence enables him to acquire advantages which the creature, by a curious instinct, somehow uses in a way that is positively commanding, but which, in any other individual, would be downright and intolerable presumption and impudence.”

After this the conversation became light and general, all further allusion to the separation being studiously avoided. The earl occasionally, however, spoke of his intended journey next morning to Chastington Hall; but, as if there was something unhappy associated with the idea, he as often hastily embraced another topic. Before Mordaunt left him, he gave orders for the carriage to be ready at an early hour, to convey him from town.

“I have long thought,” said he, in bidding Mordaunt farewell, “that excellence was a very modest ingredient; but I had no conception that wisdom lurked in so strange a form as in that creature Wylie: therefore, I would advise you to trust him in your conjugal affair; and if he do you service, which, from his acuteness, I am sure he may, you will not neglect to reward him. I wish that I had noticed his true character sooner.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FAMILY MANSION.

CHASTINGTON HALL, the principal seat of the Sandysford family, was one of those fine old mansions which are only to be seen in England, and which combine, with the antique grandeur of the baronial castle, the cheerful conveniences of the modern villa. It was erected in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the airy pinnacles, turrets, and tracery of the Gothic style, were first attempted to be assimilated to the symmetry of classic architecture.

The court-yard was entered by a stately portal, surmounted by a clock in a templar edifice, crowned with a dome, in the form of an earl's coronet; and the quadrangle of the court, in the centre of which a marble fountain threw up water from the shells of mermaids and tritons, was surrounded by an arcade. Numerous doors opened from this arcade to the lower range of apartments, and a spacious marble staircase, richly adorned with allegorical paintings, in the taste of Charles the Second's time, ascended from the court to splendid suits of galleries and chambers, all furnished in that costly and massive style which accorded with the formal pageantry of the magnificent courtiers of the Stuarts.

The situation was chosen with admirable taste and judgment. The mansion occupied the summit of a gentle rising ground, in the middle of an extensive park, naturally commanding a wide expansive prospect; and the approach was by a superb avenue of beech-trees, which seemed to droop their branches in salutation, as their master, towards the close of the day, was driven rapidly towards the portal.

The earl had never before visited this princely place, and of course it had suffered by his absence, although the servants had preserved every thing as well as it could be preserved, without repairs and renovations. It had therefore, in some degree, a faded and melancholy appearance; and when the carriage passed through the grand entrance, his lordship thought, or rather felt,

that the echoes in the arcade clamoured as if they had been suddenly awakened by the unusual sound of wheels, and rebuked him for his long neglect.

As he travelled with post-horses, he was accompanied only by Servinal, his valet; indeed, he had determined to make no other addition to the usual establishment at Chastington Hall, the strict economy to which he was resolved to reduce himself, requiring every practical retrenchment.

During the greater part of the journey he had been silent and thoughtful. The only observation which he made, in the whole time of the last stage, escaped from him involuntarily, when he first beheld the numerous gilded domes and turrets of the mansion, glittering above the trees in the setting sun. It was simple, brief, and emphatic—"Have I thought of sacrificing this?"

The carriage drove in to the foot of the grand staircase, where the servants were assembled to receive him. The men were, for the most part, grey-headed, and in their best liveries; but, although the colours were the same, the fashion of the clothes was not in so spruce a taste as those of their London compeers; and some of them, instead of smart white cotton stockings, wore their legs decently clothed in grey worsted. The household appearance of the women was no less peculiar. They were likewise dressed in their gayest attire, but rather in the orderly Sabine simplicity of the grange and farm, than in that buxom neatness that characterizes the full-formed female domestics, belonging to those seats of the nobility which the families are still so patriotic as to visit regularly in summer, like the swallows and cuckoos.

But we should be guilty of unpardonable incivility towards Mrs Valence, the housekeeper, were we to allow a personage of her importance to be dismissed from our account of the earl's reception; without some special and discriminative marks of our regard, particularly as his lordship himself showed, by the most courteous deference, the high esteem in which he held her character; and the equally great satisfaction with which he was persuaded, at the first glance, she had, on all occasions, upheld the dignity and consideration of the family. She was a tall and

ample personage, with a gentle oscillation of the head, which seemed rather to indicate a lofty sense of her own supremacy, than the infirmity of a slight paralytic affection. She stood on the third step of the stair, in the stately superiority of a full suit of dark-brown rustling double-tabinet, of which the unstinted flounces, and manifold ruffle-cuffs, bore testimony to the taste and prodigality of the mantua-makers of other times; a vast well-starched kerchief-souffle expanded her bosom into swan-like amplitude; and her hair was not only highly frizzled and powdered, but sustained a spacious structure of lace, muslins, catgut, and ribands, the very wiry skeleton of which was sufficient to have furnished iron for the shackles of more than twenty perjured lovers in these degenerate days. Her hands and arms were invested with cambric gloves, as pure as the napery which it was her pride and delight, once more, before she died, to give out that morning to old Corkly, the butler, for the use of her noble master; and her feet were in none of those slip-slop things that are only fit for the bedchamber, but decorously installed in high-heeled red morocco shoes, adorned with knots of white riband, so affluent, that they attracted the attention of his lordship, as she conducted him through the picture-gallery to the principal drawing-room, and he could not refrain from complimenting her, even at the expense of a pun, in having such handsome *beaux* at her feet.

Mrs Valence stopped instantly at the words, and placing her hands formally over each other, on her bosom, made him as solemn a curtsy as the Princess Royal, at the commencement of a minuet, at a birthday ball of her late most gracious Majesty Queen Charlotte. His lordship, with no less corresponding gravity, returned a profound bow; and when she had recovered her wonted elevation, he followed her in silence, wondering into what venerable palace, amidst the pageant rites and olden homages of Fairyland, he had been so curiously translated.

When he entered the drawing-room, he was pleased with the domestic taste in which it was evidently set for use, notwithstanding the heavy golden grandeur of the furniture, but felt a little disappointed at seeing the silver chandeliers and sconces filled with candles; however, he good-humouredly resolved to allow

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the old servants to indulge themselves for that night, nor, on reflection, was he averse to obtain unsought, a specimen of the hereditary style in which his ancestors had been accustomed to live. While he was cursorily looking at the pictures which adorned the walls, but which, as the sun was set, he could see only imperfectly, his valet came into the room to enquire if he intended to dress for dinner.

"I believe it is not worth while, Servinal. But perhaps I ought; they will expect it," said the earl.

"I think they do, my lord," replied Servinal.

"Then," cried the earl, "I will not disappoint them. Have you brought a court-dress with you?"

The valet smiled, and said he had not.

When his lordship had dressed, and had returned back into the drawing-room, the bell over the portal was rung, and the house-steward, a respectable old man out of livery, announced that dinner was ready. The earl followed him, and immediately on entering the picture-gallery, another old man proclaimed, "My lord!" upon which the folding-doors at the end of the gallery were thrown open by two younger footmen. The earl proceeded, and on reaching the landing-place he turned round to Mrs Valence, who was standing there, and said, with an air of great consideration, "Pray, does Queen-Elizabeth, with the noble Earl of Leicester, dine here to-day?"

"I believe not, my lord," replied the stately housekeeper, with undisturbed consequentiality.

This was more than the earl expected, and it forced him to laugh as he descended the great staircase; but on entering the dining-room, or rather, as it was called among the household, the banqueting-room, he started on seeing a table laid out for at least a dozen guests, and covered with ponderous ancient massy plate.

"What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed in a tone of displeasure: "Who is to dine here?"

Corkly, the butler, came up, and with three bows told him, that "it was an old custom of the family to dine always in state while at Chastington, in order to be prepared to receive any guests that might by accident come."

The earl would have said, I hope it is not expected that I am to keep open house; but he checked himself, and said gaily, "Fashions are somewhat changed since the golden age—that is, the age of the guineas, Corkly. However, to-night perform your duty as you were wont to do in my father's time; or rather, if you please, in my grandfather's."

"I was not, my lord, in the service of Earl James, your lordship's grandfather," said Corkly, with an air that would have been called dignified in an old courtier speaking of George the Second; "but I have been forty-three years in the service of your lordship's noble family."

"Indeed!" said the earl playfully; "then I must take lessons from you as to the etiquettes I am bound to observe at Chastington;" and, in saying these words, he seated himself at the table, when one of the servants in attendance touched the spring of a large musical German clock, which immediately began to play one of Handel's overtures. But the machinery being somewhat out of tune, the earl called out to them in mercy to stop that horrid musical ogre; and turning round to the butler, said, "Save me this discord of Magog's accompaniment to my knife and fork, and I will not interfere with your rites and homages to-night."

"As your lordship pleases," replied Corkly, with the reverence of a worshipper.

The eye and fancy of the earl were thus interested and amused on the night of his first arrival at the great mansion of his ancestors. There was a simplicity in the domestics which pleased him exceedingly, and their little awkwardnesses, with the formality and ceremonial which they made use of in their attendance, seemed to him at once venerable and picturesque. Corkly told him, that although the cellar had not been replenished for more than thirty years, it still contained several delicious vintages, and the earl encouraged the generous old man to expatiate on the glories of other years; but though he seemed amused by the recital, an occasional shade came over his spirits, and he reflected, with a sigh, on the unhonoured years he had squandered away in London.

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minated; but his heart recoiled from the solitary grandeur around, and as it was yet early in the evening, he ordered a fire to be lighted in a smaller apartment. He enquired if there were any books in the house, and heard, with surprise and delight, that it contained a library of many thousand volumes, to which, however, no addition had been made since the death of his father; indeed, every enquiry served to remind him how much he had neglected this princely mansion, and how he had declined from the patriotic aristocracy of his fathers.

The following morning he walked into the park, and saw in every place the stateliest trees marked for the woodman, and many already felled.

"I could not have imagined," he said, in writing to Mordaunt, and mentioning the effect on his feelings, "that the odd trick was such an edge-tool."

CHAPTER XXX.

NOBLE AUTHORSHIP.

THE first week after the arrival of Lord Sandymore at Chastington Hall passed more agreeably than might have been expected, considering the suddenness of the change which it occasioned in his manner of living. Two or three days were spent in examining the house, and the curiosities which remained as so many monuments of the taste and whim of his ancestors, and, above all, in an inspection of the family pictures. His lordship had some pretensions to a physiognomical perception of character, and he amused himself with conjectures as to the mind and disposition of the direct line from which he was himself descended, tracing, or rather fancying that he traced, the features which indicated the particular points of resemblance in their respective characters. This recreation was occasionally broken in upon by visits from some of the neighbouring gentlemen, with whom, although he received them with his wonted

politeness, he showed no inclination to cultivate an acquaintance; on the contrary, he took several opportunities to inform them that he had come to Chastington expressly for retirement. He also visited his domain; and having suspended the general orders for the cutting down of the timber, he formed from his own observation another plan of thinning the woods, without materially affecting the beauty of the sylvan furniture of the park, especially in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. His eye had a natural perception of the picturesque; and the plan which he thus adopted, instead of impairing the magnificence of the rides and walks, had the effect of rendering them more pleasant and diversified in the views. The trees which were felled allowed more light, as it were, to be thrown upon the landscape, and prospects were opened, of the extent of which no previous conception had been formed.

It was his custom in the morning to ride round the park, and from the different eminences to examine what distant objects might be seen from the parts covered with wood, and then to order the woodman to fell in such direction as would bring a village spire, an ancient tower, or a modern mansion, into the termination of the vista which they laid open. But it was around the hall that this species of picturesque economy was most judiciously managed. In the course of years, the timber had so increased in magnitude that it inclosed the building with a depth and darkness of umbrageous boughs, altogether inconsistent with the florid lightness of the architecture, the effect of which produced a degree of gloom and solemnity in the building, strangely at variance with the fanciful style of the place. The earl, by throwing down some of the trees which had grown to such a height as to intercept the views, and by letting in the light through the general masses of the surrounding woods, produced a change truly magical; but he spared the celebrated chestnut which darkens the southern windows. The lamentation in the neighbourhood for the fine old trees of Chastington, was changed into rejoicing, and all the visitors declared their delight and satisfaction at the improvements.

But although, in this manner the earl for some time created not only amusement, but business for himself, there was a same-

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ness in the undertaking, and a patience requisite, which did not exactly suit the ardour and activity of his character, and he had recourse to other means of recreation. Having prescribed their work to the woodmen, he resolved to wait the issue of the full effect; and in order that he might prevent his restlessness from preying on himself, he endeavoured to find pastime in changing the appearance of the state apartments, not by the expensive medium of repairs or upholstery, but by new arrangements of the paintings and sculpture, the china and the cabinets; but still there was something wanting. This also he found must become a subordinate concern—a matter of occasional recreation; for it afforded none of that earnest exercise to the mind which he longed to obtain. At last he had recourse to the library; and after a miscellaneous and cursory glance of the collection, he set himself into a regular course of historical reading.

To read was, with Lord Sandysford, to think. Every page that his eye travelled furnished some new association to his mind, till the most remarkable and striking incidents of general history became connected with the passing topics of his own time; for the French Revolution was then raging in all its fury, and drawing into its destructive whirlpool the venerable institutions of successive wisdom and experience.

The excitement which this systematic acquisition of knowledge produced, operated to an immediate effect. His lordship became dissatisfied with the inadequate policy by which it was attempted to suppress the natural issue of a long-continued accumulation of moral impulses; and, actuated by the new light which he had acquired on the subject of national mutations, began to write an historical view of the political effects of popular opinions.

When he had finished this pamphlet, he was conscious that, however just his reflections, and indisputable his facts, it was not, in point of style and arrangement, such as would do him credit in the character of an author. He was aware that the habit he had acquired of contemplating every thing through an ironical medium, in some degree affected his reasoning even in his most serious moments, and that he used terms and phrases

in a recondite sense, not altogether understood by the generality of the public; so that, while his taste, with respect to the composition of others, was remarkably pure and just, he feared that his own work might be considered as conceited in its diction, and deficient in that air of sincerity essential to produce effect. He therefore longed for the assistance of a literary friend to correct its incongruities; but there was no such being within the whole compass of all the adjacent parishes. At one time he thought of writing to his bookseller in London to procure, and send to him by the coach, some one of those retainers of the press who execute the editorial duties to new editions of old works; but he had early taken an anti-social prejudice against authors and artists in general, and could not endure the thought of having his sequestration disturbed by the caprice of beings whom he considered as sorely skinless to every thing that but seemed to interfere with their vanities. Publish, however, he must: he felt himself urged to it by the very hand of fate itself, and he could not resist the force of a necessity that was as irresistible to him as if he had been the hero of a Greek or German tragedy, yearning to commit a crime.

In this dilemma he thought of our hero, of whose prudence he had begun to entertain a favourable opinion, and wrote to him to find some clever literary man, who would undertake to prepare a pamphlet for the press; saying, that he would pay liberally for the assistance, but that he wished to remain unknown.

Andrew was at first not a little perplexed by the earl's commission. He knew no author, nor was he in habits of intercourse with any one who did; till recollecting Nettle, the reporter, he resolved to apply to him, with a previous determination, however, not to employ him in the business. Accordingly, the same afternoon in which he received his lordship's letter, he went to the newspaper-office, under the pretext of enquiring of Nettle if he knew of any person who would take charge of a small parcel to Scotland for him.

No visit was ever better timed: it was exactly at the wonted hour when Nettle usually went to his chop-house for dinner; and Andrew, while speaking to him respecting the little packet he had to send to his grandmother, said, "But, Mr Nettle, if

ye're gaun to seek your dinner, it's just my time too, and may be ye'll no object to let me go with you."

Nettle was not a little pleased with the proposition; for, possessing a strong relish of drollery, Andrew was a character that could not fail, he thought, to furnish him with some amusement.

"But," rejoined our hero, when he found his company accepted, "ye'll no tak me to an extravagant house—no that I mind, mair than my neighbours, to birl my bawbee at a time, but in ilka-day meals I am obligated to hae a regard for frugality."

Nettle profited by the hint, and took Andrew to one of the best coffee-houses in the neighbourhood. Our hero perceived his drift; but he also thought to himself, "This is an occasion when I should birl my bawbee." However, upon entering the room, he feigned great alarm, and catching hold of his companion earnestly by the arm, said, "Noo, Mr Nettle, I hope this house is no aboon half-a-crown. Od, Mr Nettle, I dinna like the looks o't—I doot the folk that come here drink wine."

Nettle laughed, and seating himself at one of the tables, said, "Don't be frightened, Andrew; leave the matter to me—I'll manage every thing in the most economical manner."

"Mind it's on condition ye do sae that I sit down," replied our hero, seemingly very awkwardly affected by the appearance of the company around, as if a young man, who was in the practice of frequenting the tables and parties of the most fashionable houses, was likely to be disconcerted by the migratory visitants of a coffee-house. But he perceived that the reporter was uninformed as to this, and his object was to make this man of the town subservient to his purposes.

Dinner was ordered by Nettle, who, while it was setting down, said dryly, "It is usual, you know, to have a bottle of white wine during dinner; but, as we are on an economical regimen, I will only order a pint."

"I never ordered a pint o' wine since I was born," cried Andrew to Nettle, who immediately said, "O very well! I have no objection—waiter, bring a bottle."

Our hero was here caught in his own snare, and exclaimed with unaffected sincerity, "A whole bottle!"

Nettle was exceedingly diverted, and laughed at his own joke, especially when Andrew said, as the wine was placed on the table, "This is what I ca' a rank shame;" but he was much less displeased than he pretended, and cunningly added, "I'm thinking that this trade of translating and writing paragraphs of yours, Mr Nettle, is no an ill line, an' a body could get weel intil't, and had a name."

"I think," replied Nettle, delighted with his companion, "that you ought to try your hand, Andrew. I'm sure any thing from your pen must amuse the public."

"Hooly, hooly," cried Andrew; "a' in a gude time, Mr Nettle—I hae my notions on the subjec, but we maun creep before we gang—only there's a curiosity in the craft that I dinna weel understand; and that is, how to corree the press, and to put in the points, wi' the lave o' the wee perjinkities;—that, I hae a thought, is no an easy concern."

"As to the wee perjinkities, as you call them, and matters of that sort, the printers take a great part of the trouble off the author's hands. But the plague is with the substantial matter, Andrew; defects in that are not so easily remedied."

"But surely they can be remedied?" exclaimed our sly sim-pleton.

Nettle was mightily pleased with this sally, and said, "Andrew, when your book's ready to print, let me know, and I'll give you a lift in that way."

"It's very discreet o' you to offer sae; but is't true that there are folk in London wha mak a leeving by sicklike wark?"

"True!" cried Nettle. "How do you suppose the speeches of members of parliament are got up for publication—the voyages and travels of country gentlemen—novels of ladies of fashion—or any of the other *et cetera* by which illiterate opulence seeks to obtain literary renown?"

"Weel, this London is a wonderful place," replied Andrew; "and are there really folk that do thae kind o' jobs for siller?"

"To be sure there are; and they make a snug thing of it."

"Noo, Mr Nettle, that's what I canna comprehend. Hae they shops or offices?—Whar do they bide?—And how are

they kent?—They hae nae signs up?—What's their denomination?"

"It's not easy to answer so many questions in a breath," replied Nettle; "but I could name you fifty. There, for example, is our own countryman, Mole, he makes a thousand a-year by the business."

"Weel, to be sure, how hidden things are brought to light! I ne'er," exclaimed Andrew, "could fathom by what hook or crook he was leeving, nor whar he leeves. Whar is't?"

Nettle told him; and Andrew, inwardly overjoyed, proposed to drink his health, as a credit to Scotland, in a bumper, although the cloth was not removed.

"Stop, stop, man; it's not yet time; let us have the table cleared before we begin to toasts," said Nettle, laughing at Andrew's supposed rustic simplicity.

Our hero then enquired what books Mole had edited and prepared for the press; and in what degree of estimation they were held. Nettle told him the names of several; but Andrew affected to doubt the truth of what he said, and alleged that they were perhaps not at all of that degree of merit which his companion asserted. This begot something like a difference of opinion between them, which ended in the reiteration of Nettle's assertion, and an affirmation that the publishers would verify the correctness of what he maintained. Andrew, however, did not urge the matter further. He had thus adroitly acquired the name and address of an able editor, and the names of the booksellers by whom he was employed. He had, in consequence, nothing further to say to Nettle that evening; and accordingly, pushing the wine-decanter past him, he rose to go away, saying, "I'm no for ony mair."

"Sit down," cried Nettle, "and finish the wine. The port here is excellent."

"Ye wouldna hae me surely, Mr Nettle, to sit till I'm a taver't? As sure's death, I fin' the wine rinnin' in my head already—I'll be fou if I drink ony mair. No; ye maun just let me gang my ways. Ye'll pay the reckoning; and if it dinna exceed five shillings, I'll no grudge the cost o' your conversation, which has been vera curious and agreeable—vera curious indeed, Mr Nettle.

But gude-night;" and in saying this, Andrew hurried from the house.

His first course was to the shop of Mole's principal publisher, where he enquired for one of the books; and upon seeing it, he looked into several passages as if he had been examining them critically, and said, "I dinna think, now, that this is a very weel-written work."

The bookseller was a little surprised at the remark; but as booksellers are accustomed to see wise and learned characters in very queer and odd shapes, he gave Andrew credit for some critical acumen, while he controverted his opinion, maintaining the merits of the style and composition as both of the first class. Andrew, however, stuck to his point, and finally declined to purchase the work; satisfied, however, that the publisher had a high opinion of its literary merits. On leaving that shop he went to another, and another, until he found the opinion of Nettle fully verified. He then proceeded to the chambers of Mole, whom he found at home, and whom he thus addressed although they had no previous acquaintance:—"Mr Mole, I ha' a bit turn o' wark that wouldna be the war o' your helping hand."

This abruptness startled the engineer of literature; but as he had seen the unlicked figure of Andrew at some of the fashionable houses, where he occasionally helped to make sensible speeches for the gentlemen, he divined, in some degree, the object of his visit, and civilly requested him to be seated, saying, "Pray, may I ask the nature of the business?"

"It's a kind o' a book that I hae a thought anent; but no being just as I could wish, in some respects, so particular in the grammaticals, I think that, before putting it out to the world, it wouldna be the waur o' being coll'd and kaim't by an experienced han' like yours."

"Have you the manuscript with you?" enquired Mole, endeavouring to look as serious as possible.

"No, sir; I wantit first to ken if you would undertake the work."

"That will, in some degree, depend on the nature of the subject and the amount of the remuneration," replied Mole. "Do

you mean simply that I should revise the manuscript, or re-write the work entirely?"

"I mean that ye're no to hain your ability in the business; but what I want to ken is the cost—supposing now the vera utmost, and that ye were to write it all over again, what would you expect?"

"You will not grudge to pay me at the rate of ten guineas a pica sheet octavo?"

"I'm no versed in your trade; but let me see a book that you would mak your ellwand, and I'll maybe can then make a guess at the estimate." An octavo volume, printed on pica type, was produced, and the extent of a sheet explained to him. "Dear me," he cried, "but this, sir, is a dreadfu' price—ten guineas for doing the like o' that!—Na, na, sir, I couldna think o' mair than five pounds; and, if ye gie satisfaction, I'll try to make it guineas."

In the end, however, a bargain was made, by which it was agreed that the manuscript was to be submitted to the architect; and if entire re-edification was found requisite, the remuneration was to be at the rate of seven pounds ten shillings. Mole pleaded earnestly for guineas; but Andrew declared he could by no possibility afford a farthing more. The same evening he wrote to Lord Sandyford, that he had found a friend with some experience in the book-making line; and that, if his lordship would send up his manuscript, perhaps he could get him to undertake the job; but that he was a particular man, and very high in his price, which was commonly at the rate of ten guineas the sheet of pica demy octavo. Nevertheless, he assured his lordship he would try and get it done on as moderate terms as possible.

The earl knew as little of pica demy as Andrew himself, nor did he care. The manuscript was sent by a special messenger to our hero, who lost no time in taking it to Mole, by whom it was cursorily glanced over in his presence.

Mole was struck with the composition, and the general elegance of taste and imagination that scintillated in many passages; and he said to Andrew, with a sharp and an inquisitive look, "Is this your work?"

"It's what I spoke to you anent. I'm thinking it's no sae bad as ye expectit."

"Bad!" exclaimed Mole; "it is full of the finest conceptions of a masterly genius. This is inspiration—I am utterly astonished."

"It's a great pleasure to me, sir," said Andrew, dryly, "that ye're so weel satisfied wi't. I trust it will make you abate something in the price."

"We have made an agreement, and the terms must be fulfilled. I cannot say that the work will require to be entirely re-written. The material is precious, and wrought beautifully in many passages; but it may, nevertheless, require to be recast."

"Then," said Andrew, "since ye like it so well, I'll pay the seven pounds ten per sheet, pica demy octavo, but no a single farthing mair, mind that; for if you haud me to the straights o' the bargain, I'll just be as severe upon you. So a' that I hae to say for the present is the old byword, 'that they that do their turn in time, sit half idle—ye'll make what speed ye dow.'"

The admiration of Mole was rather increased than diminished when, after the departure of our hero, he read the manuscript more leisurely. He deemed it utterly impossible that a being so uncouth could have written such a work; but he had been told, when he first observed his odd figure in society, that he was a creature of infinite whim and fancy; and the manuscript was still more calculated than this account to set all theories of physiognomy at defiance.

As for Andrew himself, he exulted in the bargain, and at his own address in suppressing, in the first instance, the rate at which he had agreed the revision should be made. But the effect intended by informing the earl that the price was to be seven pounds ten shillings per sheet, instead of ten guineas, failed entirely in one respect; for his lordship was no further satisfied with the bargain, than as another proof of the simplicity and integrity of his agent, at least it so appeared in the sequel; for when the manuscript was recast and sent back to Chastington Hall, he remitted a hundred pounds for Mole, which was nearly double the sum stipulated. Andrew, in taking the

money to him, said, "Ye'll find, sir, that I'm no waur than my word; there's a hundred pound note, and as for the balance, ye'll just keep it to buy a snuff-box or any other playock that may please you better."

This liberality was, to the amazed reviser, still more extraordinary, after the higgling he had suffered, than even the intellectual merits of the pamphlet; and in all companies afterwards, he spoke of Andrew as an incomprehensible prodigy of genius.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A SECRET EXPEDITION.

IN the mean time, the situation of Lady Sandysford at Elderbower with the dowager, was far from yielding any consolation to her mortified spirit; for although the conduct of the old lady was truly exemplary, there was yet a sadness in her kindness that penetrated the heart of the countess with anguish. The mother-lady was constantly picturing to her own imagination the regular and gradual ruin of her only and darling son—he who had been the pride of her maternal heart, the joy of her widowhood, and the glory of her expectations. No complaint escaped her, but numberless little accidental expressions betrayed the secret perturbation of her spirit; and more than once she earnestly urged the young countess to allow her to write to the earl, and to invite him to Elderbower.

The first time that the dowager expressed this wish, was one day after dinner. The weather out of doors was raw and gloomy—an unusual depression had all the morning weighed upon the spirits of both the ladies; and the countess began to distrust the power with which she supposed herself capable of adopting a new frame and course of life, that would one day extort the admiration of her lord, and revive that affection which she had lost, not forfeited. The old lady eagerly urged her suit;

affirming, that it was impossible her son could have fallen so entirely from the original magnanimity of his nature, as to slight an endeavour to recover his esteem, which had all the energy of contrition, with the grandeur of virtue. "Believe me, Lady Sandyford," exclaimed the partial mother, "that if he knew the depth of your sorry at the misfortune that has come upon you both, there is nothing within the reach of his power and ability, that he would not exert to console you."

The countess burst into tears, and replied, "Alas! my dear mother, in what is this to end? I am conscious of my innocence. I know that I have never swerved from the purity of a wife; but I have failed to retain the affections of my husband; because, in the lightness of youth, and the intoxication of vanity, I was more gratified with the loquacious admiration of those whom I in reality despised than with the quiet and placid tenor of his affection. My eyes are opened to my error—they have been opened by the consequences—vexation for my disregard may have irritated him into many of those follies that both your ladyship and I deplore, and may have to mourn all the remainder of our lives. But what I now most immediately suffer, is the grief of knowing, that while I am here you have the monitor of your affliction constantly before you; and, alas! I cannot go away without giving some warranting to the evil report of the world."

"But why will you not allow me to tell George the state of your feelings, and leave it to himself to determine whether he will come to Elderbower or not?"

The dowager, in saying this, took the countess gently by the hand, adding, "Indeed, my dear Augusta, you are wrong in this—you are sacrificing yourself—you are distressing me; and I fear you may have cause to rue the effect on George."

Lady Sandyford dried her eyes, and said, "Ah, I fear your ladyship thinks of him as if he was still a boy! You are little aware of the latent strength of his character; nor was I, till reflecting on many things since I came to this house. Whatever his faults or his errors may be, meanness is not one of them. Nothing would be so easy as to bring him here, out of compas-

sion; but I cannot be an object of compassion to the man I love. The very virtue of his generosity takes the nature of a vice towards me, and I dare not appeal to it."

She could add no more—the tears rushed into her eyes; and she wept so bitterly that the old lady became alarmed, and said, "This, Augusta, is what I did not look for from you. Let us drop the subject. But I will write to George; and without saying you are with me, I will enquire into the circumstances, as they may have affected him, by which your separation has been produced—an event of which I am totally unable at present to form any proper opinion."

In the course of the same afternoon, the dowager wrote to the earl, believing he was still in London; and while engaged with her letter, the countess went to her own room, where Flounce was notably employed in distributing her lady's wardrobe from the trunks. The box which belonged to the mother of the orphan was standing on the floor; and Flounce, two or three times, before she excited any attention towards it, expressed her wonder about what it could contain. At last, however, she was successful;—the eyes of the countess were directed towards the package; and her mind becoming disengaged from the passion of her own thoughts, her curiosity was awakened.

"I think, Flounce," said her ladyship, "we should examine that box, and take an inventory of what it contains for the poor infant. The contents cannot be valuable; but they may be such as to help the orphan at some future day to discover her relations."

"I dare say they will," replied Flounce; "and I have my own reasons for thinking she will be found to have come of very great people in foreign parts. Does not your ladyship recollect what delightful ear-rings were in her mother's ears?"

After some discussion respecting the means of satisfying this, as to whether a hammer was requisite, or the poker might serve, it was agreed that the assistance of the latter potentate should be first summoned, and, if unsuccessful, the hammer might then be invited to take a part in the business. The poker, however, proved, in the strenuous hands of Flounce, abundantly effective

—the lid of the box was wrenched open, and the contents exposed to view.

The first sight presented nothing remarkable. It consisted of different articles of female finery, neither of a very high, nor, as Flounce truly observed, of a very prime and fashionable quality; but, on exploring the mine, a small casket was found; it was seized by her ladyship, and opened in haste, while Flounce stood the figure of wonder by her side. The contents, however, were not of any particular value; but among them was the miniature of a gentleman, which the countess recognized as that of Mr Ferrers. A letter was also found from Ferrers, written in such imperfect Italian as men of fashion are in the practice of addressing to the virgin train of the opera and ballet. It was not, however, either of a very amorous or amiable kind, for it seemed to be the dismissal from his protection of the unfortunate mother.

The first movement which the perusal produced in the spirit of the countess, was not of the most philanthropic kind; as for Flounce, she loudly and vehemently protested against all the male "sect," as she called them, for a pack of infidel wretches.

After various disquisitions on this discovery, it was agreed that, under existing circumstances, it would be as well, for the present, to say nothing in the house about it; but that Flounce should return to the Rose and Crown, and explain to the landlady, in confidence, the relationship of the child, and urge her to take the necessary means to acquaint the father of Monimia's situation.

This was a charming mission, and exactly suited to the genius of Flounce, who accordingly went off next day by the London coach, which passed the gate of Elderbower; and that the servants might not be wondering and guessing as to the objects of her journey, she prudently deemed it expedient to inform them that she was going to town to bring some additions to her lady's wardrobe.

The landlady of the Rose and Crown received her with great cordiality; but when, after many solemn injunctions, Flounce disclosed the object of her visit, Mrs Vintage coolly said, she would neither make nor meddle in the matter; for it was

rumoured that Mr Ferrers had gambled away his whole estate, and that Castle Rooksborough was expected to be sold immediately. Flounce was not quite content with the conduct of the landlady, and returned by the coach the same evening, somewhat in a huffy humour, greatly to the surprise of all the household at Elderbower, who, being in the practice of calculating the distance, discovered that she could not possibly have been at London.

Flounce, however, was not to be confounded, as she told her lady, by any suspectifying persons; and on the first expression of John Luncheon's surprise when he saw her alight, she informed him, that having forgotten something very particular, she was obliged to return; but there was a mystery and a flurry in her appearance that John did not much like, as he did not, indeed, much like herself; and he made his remarks on her accordingly to his fellow-servants in the hall, the effect of which had no tendency to exalt their opinion either of mistress or of maid.

The whole affair, however, might have soon passed off, and a plausible excuse been devised for not sending Flounce again to town: but the wonder was considerably augmented by another equally unaccountable excursion which she made the same evening.

In a laudatory account to her lady of the infant—for she had summoned the nurse and Monimia to the Rose and Crown—she deplored the meanness of its attire, declaring that it was dressed in old trolloping things, which had belonged to Mrs Peony's brat; adding, that she had seen in a shop-window in Elderton the most beautiful baby-linen, advising her lady to purchase a supply for the poor dear little creature, just in charity, although it was not a legitimate. The countess consented to this, and gave the requisite money.

Flounce was not one of those foolish virgins who slumber and sleep in their tasks; on the contrary, she could never rest till her work was done, especially if it was a business seasoned with any species of adventure, or of mystery. Within less than two hours after her return, she contrived to slip out alone, and to purchase the articles she wanted. These she directed herself

for Mrs Peony; to whom she also wrote on the subject in the shop where she had bought them, and carried the parcel in her own hands to the London coach-office at the Nag's Head, and saw them booked with her own eyes, all in the most commendable spirit of faithful agency.

The purchase of fine baby-clothes in a small market-town, especially by a lady's maid, is an event of some consequence; and the expedition of Flounce caused a good deal of conversation; insomuch, that the landlady at the Nag's Head, where John Luncheon and the coachman were in the practice of nightly taking their pipe and potation, heard of it next day; and mentioning the subject to her husband, he recollected the circumstance of Flounce bringing a parcel for the coach, and being very particular in seeing it booked. By this means the affair reached the ears of John Luncheon, who, having no remarkable esteem for Flounce, whom he described as a pert London hussey, surmised something not much to the credit of her virgin purity, and communicated his suspicions to Betty Blabbingwell, one of the maids, who rehearsed it, with some circumstantial and descriptive details additional, to Mrs Polisher, the housekeeper. Mrs Polisher, however, was not convinced of the truth of the report, but went herself to the shop where the purchase was made, where she not only ascertained the whole circumstances of the fact, but also that the articles purchased were of the very finest description, altogether unlikely, indeed, for any chamber-maid's accidental progeny. But Mrs Polisher was a prudent woman, and she said nothing. She, however, made her own reflections, and drew an inference that riveted her antipathy against the countess—an antipathy which had its origin in the great affection which she bore her young master from the first hour that she dandled him in her arms when a baby. But she did not disclose her suspicions to the dowager, being determined to find out the whole affair before unnecessarily occasioning a rupture, which she anticipated would soon be complete and final.

In this manner the seeds of distrust were carried into that asylum, where Lady Sandyford had hoped to prepare herself for appearing with renewed advantage in the eyes of her lord.

Perhaps she erred in concealing the discovery which she had made of Ferrers' child, and the protection which she had bestowed on the orphan; nor is it easy to explain the feeling which influenced her; but a vague notion had occasionally floated across her mind, that the paragraph which involved her in so much trouble referred to his marked attentions; and it operated with the effect of a motive in restraining her from ever alluding to him in her conversations with the dowager.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A MYSTERY.

ALTHOUGH the earl had got his manuscript prepared for the press, as we have described, the publication was delayed by the occurrence of a disagreeable incident. One morning, on reading the county newspaper, he happened to observe the advertisement of a sale by auction of the furniture of Castle Rooksborough; and, among other things enumerated, was a quantity of china, said to have been the same which was used by James I. at his accession to the English crown. In the changes of his furniture, his lordship wanted some additional old china to complete an effect in one of the state-apartments, and having nothing very particular at the time to engage his attention, he determined to attend the sale of Ferrers' effects.

Castle Rooksborough was, as we have already mentioned, situated near the Rose and Crown, about thirty miles from Chastington Hall. It was therefore, on account of the distance, in some degree necessary that his lordship should remain there all night; and being desirous that his mother should not hear of his being so near her neighbourhood—for Elderbower was but one stage off—he resolved to go alone to the sale, that he might not be known by his servants.

It was late in the evening when he reached the Rose and

Crown, and nothing particular occurred that night. Next morning, before the sale, he walked in the park of Castle Rooksborough; and although the air was clear and bracing, and the spring sat in every bower, crowned with her gayest garlands, there was something in the scene and circumstances which did not altogether tend to exhilarate his spirits. The estate was dilapidated by a spendthrift possessor, and ordered to be sold, with all the moveables, by his creditors. It had been for ages in the possession of the prodigal's ancestors; and a general murmur prevailed throughout the county against the unhappy man's indiscretions. The reflections which these things produced sank into the heart of Lord Sandymore, and placed his own conduct in a mortifying light before him.

As he was straying over the grounds, he fell in with a young country girl carrying a child. The brilliant dark Italian eyes of the infant attracted his attention; and the style in which it was dressed, so much above the appearance of the nurse, induced him to stop and speak to her. The beauty of the infant won upon his affections, and his curiosity was excited to learn how a child, apparently better born, came to be entrusted to so young, and seemingly so improper a nurse. The girl, however, could give him no satisfaction. All that she knew respecting it was, that she had been hired by the landlady of the Rose and Crown to take care of it while it remained with Mrs Peony, who was employed by a grand lady to suckle it.

There appeared to the earl some mystery in this; and when he had purchased the lot of china, which he ordered to be sent to Chastington Hall, he returned to the inn to hold some conversation with the landlady on the subject of Monimia, for the child was that orphan.

Mrs Vintage of the Rose and Crown did not prove quite so communicative as he expected. She only civilly answered his questions, and said no more than what a direct response required.

"Do you know the parents of the child!" said his lordship. "They must be persons of some condition, I should think, by the dress of the infant."

"As to that I cannot say: I have never seen either of them

The mother is dead; and as for the father, I can give you no account of him."

"Then who in this neighbourhood pays the nurse?"

"I do," replied Mrs Vintage.

"And how are you repaid?" said the inquisitive peer.

"I do not think I am bound to answer that question to a stranger," replied the prudent landlady of the Rose and Crown.

His lordship, finding that she was resolved not to satisfy his curiosity in a direct manner, and her guarded answers having only served to whet his inquisitiveness, he took another, and a more ingenious course with her. He affected to let the topic drop, and began to question her about the neighbourhood, and the travellers of rank who had recently stopped at the house—a subject on which she delighted to expatiate. Among others, she mentioned the transit of the unfortunate Lady Sandysford in her father's carriage; in speaking of whom there was a degree of embarrassment in her manner that strongly excited his attention.

The sharpness of the earl's interrogatories increased her confusion; and she contrived, in order to avoid the keenness of his questioning, to leave the room, just at the moment when she had led him to suspect that there was some mystery connected with the countess and the child.

The agitation into which he was thrown by this conversation is not to be described. He almost instantly ordered a post-chaise, and returned to Chastington Hall, burning with thoughts of suspicion. At the first stage where he changed, he met Servinal, his valet, returning from London, where he had been sent on some business; he had come back with the coach on which Flounce had travelled from Elderbower on her mission to Castle Rooksborough, and he heard of that damsel's secret expedition—she herself having told the coachman that she was Lady Sandysford's maid.

On seeing his master alight, and not being aware of the state of his feelings, Servinal informed his lordship of that circumstance, wondering what business could have taken Flounce to the Rose and Crown. This was confirmation to all his lordship's jealousy; and when he resumed his chair at night in the library

of Chastington, his very soul was boiling with indignation against the insolence, as he now deemed it, of the message which Sir Charles Runnington had brought from the marquis. But suddenly, in the fury of his passion, the remembrance of the part he had himself performed as a husband, came like a blast from the frozen ocean, and chilled his blood.

The temper of his feelings changed. The countess, in the youth and bloom of her bridal charms, rose in the freshness of his early fondness, and moved him to sorrow and remorse. All other feelings were absorbed in contrition, and he wept with the profuse tears of lamenting childhood.

In an instant, however, the paroxysm took another turn, and he reflected on the sincerity with which he had loved, and how coldly his ardour had been met; how negligently his tastes and his predilections were regarded; and giving way again to the impulse of these reflections, he accused the countess as the most insensible of women—the most artful, perfidious, and base—and, starting from his seat, rushed across the room, with desperation in his looks, and his hands fiercely clenched and upraised. In that moment the door opened, and his mother entered.

His surprise was inexpressible at her appearance, and still more, when, in pressing him to her bosom, and weeping on his neck, she said, "Alas! my unhappy boy, I did not expect to find you in this condition."

The venerable matron, unable to repress her maternal feelings, when, by accident, she heard that he had retired from London to Chastington Hall, determined to visit him. Nor did the countess oppose this natural solicitude.

When the first reciprocity of affection was over, the dowager took a seat beside her son, and calmly remonstrated against the seclusion in which he had too suddenly shut himself up; expressing her hope that the breach between him and his wife was not irreparable.

"What!" he exclaimed, "can you think me able to submit to the degradation of respecting a flagrant adulteress? I have such proof. I have seen with my own eyes the living evidence of her guilt. Oh, let us speak of her no more, let her perish in the unproclaimed infamy to which she has sunk!"

The dowager was thunderstruck, and remained looking at him, and unable to speak. But when his agitation had in some degree subsided, she recovered her self-possession, and enquired to what circumstances and proofs of guilt he had alluded. This led to an account of his excursion, and to the supposed discovery he had made of Monimia.

The old lady could not credit the story, and expressed her suspicion of some mistake on his part, which had the effect of reviving all his indignant feelings.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, "you do not know the woman—her whole soul is engaged with nothing but herself—she could never see attention shown to any other, without considering it as something unjustly taken from herself—she never felt that her interests and affections were wedded to mine, but regarded them as distinct and pre-eminent—she worshipped no other god but herself—she made me feel, from the fatal day of our marriage, that there was nothing mutual between us, that I was only subsidiary to her. The sense of that discovery drove me to despair—a despair that wore the mask of pleasure to the world, while worse than ten thousand scorpions was stinging me at the heart. In all that wild and wicked interval, she calmly set herself out for adulation; never once did she look as if she felt any apprehension for the issue of a career that she could not but see must terminate in ruin—even in those hours of remorse and ennui, when one gentle wish from her might have recalled me to myself, did ever any such pass the cold marble of her lips?"

"This will not do, George," interposed the dowager, with an accent of entreaty and moderation. "This vehemence of feeling is not what the object deserves, if she is so unworthy as you have represented her. But calm yourself; it is possible there may be some misunderstanding or misconception in all that you have told me."

"There is neither conjecture nor misunderstanding in what I have felt," replied the earl; but let us drop the subject. I am glad to see you at Chastington, and I will show you, to-morrow, the improvements I am making."

In this abrupt way his lordship changed the conversation, and, in the course of a few minutes, was almost as cheerful with

his mother as if he had never given her any reason to deplore his folly, nor had any to do so himself. But determined in his own mind to sift the matter thoroughly, since it was possible there might be some mistake, he wrote the same evening to Mr Vellum, requesting Wylie to be sent to assist him in the arrangement of some domestic concerns. He said nothing of the business for which he wished this assistance; but allowed the solicitor to imagine that it might be with reference to the papers and suggestions, which the earl, a few posts before, had received relative to the state of his income and debts.

The situation of the dowager was most embarrassing. When she parted from the countess, she had promised to return on the third day, or to write. But with the disagreeable news she had received, neither could properly be done. At the same time, however, such had been the favourable light in which her daughter-in-law appeared, from the moment of her arrival at Elderbower, that she would not allow herself to entertain any thought derogatory from her honour. She expected that the earl would have set out the next day to Castle Rooksborough again, to examine the mystery there more leisurely; but he evinced no disposition to do so. He merely said, after breakfast, that he had written to London for a young gentleman, whom he thought might be useful in helping him to investigate the mystery of the child of the Rose and Crown; "For," said he gaily, "until we discover its parentage, we can assign it no better sire and dam."

But if the arrival of his mother disturbed the monotony of the earl's retirement, it was an event of delightful importance to the domestics at Chastington Hall. Mrs Valence exulted in the opportunity which it afforded to her of displaying, before so thorough a judge as her ladyship, with what care, and in what perfect beauty she had preserved every article which had been committed to her charge; nor was there a servant in the house who had not some voucher to produce of fidelity and vigilance. All received their due meed of dignified commendation, and all of them rejoiced in the greatness of that reward.

Her arrival was also productive of other cheerful consequences to the household. The shyness with which the earl

received the visits of the neighbouring gentlemen, had, in a great measure, suspended the intercourse that might otherwise have arisen; but the elderly matrons in their families, who had been acquainted with the dowager in the time of her lord, on hearing that she had arrived at Chastington, came flocking in crowds to see her; so that, for a day or two, there was something like a stir about the house.

The presence of a Lady Sandysford at the hall, was, indeed, like the spring; it drew out from their winter seats, as gay as tulips from their bulbs, all the ladies in the vicinity; and many a sable son of the church was seen slowly moving towards the portal, as sleek and as plump as the snails, that the genial influence of the season had induced to come abroad. Among other visitors, the dowager was pleased to discover, in a little smart old man, in black satin inexpressibles, with sky-blue silk stockings, golden buckles, a white waistcoat, and a green coat, with his smirking face dapperly set in a trim white tie-wig, Dr Trefoil, whom she had herself been chiefly instrumental in bringing into notice when a young man; not, however, so much on account of his professional abilities, as for a certain dainty and pleasing method of treating those little irksomenesses of the sex, that are often as afflicting to themselves and their friends as more serious diseases. The doctor, in his youth, had been a beau; indeed, his appearance bore incontestible proofs of that historical fact; but, notwithstanding all the pretty little compliments which he was daily in the practice of paying the ladies, he still remained a bachelor—and was now determined to die, as he said, a martyr to his humanity. For it seems the doctor had, like many other sage and learned personages, become a convert to the Malthusian heresy, then recently promulgated, and was alarmed at the hazard we run of being elbowed out of the world, in spite of the faculty, war, pestilence, famine, and sudden death.

Scarcely had her old acquaintance offered his congratulations at seeing her ladyship look so well, when, recollecting his delicacy and address, it immediately occurred to her that he might be a fit person to employ as an agent, in sifting the mystery connected with the birth of the child. But it is necessary that we

should revert to the state and situation of the young countess, who, in the mean time, was left as dull as any lady of fashion could well be, that had actually happened to suffer the enamel of her reputation to be damaged.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DISCOVERY.

WHEN the countess heard that the earl had, suddenly after her departure from London, also quitted the town and retired to Chastington Hall, her mind was seized with an unaccountable anxiety and apprehension. She ascribed the cause at first, naturally enough, to his wish to avoid their mutual friends until the separation had blown over; but when her father wrote that their house had been taken possession of by Mr Vellum, and that the establishment was broken up, she felt that a change indeed had taken place, as much beyond her control as it was above her comprehension. That Lord Sandysford should disentangle himself at once, and as it were by force, from all his town connexions, seemed to her a prodigy of which she could form no just estimate. She sometimes thought it was but the temporary resolution of a fit of spleen; but she remembered, with a feeling to which she could assign no name, that he had often manifested a decision and firmness that belied that carelessness which she had considered as the strongest peculiarity of his character. The event interested her curiosity as well as affected her sensibility; and she was glad when the dowager proposed to visit him at Chastington.

Nothing, however, could exceed her chagrin, when, instead of the return of the old lady on the third day, according to her promise, she received a note, simply stating that it was the dowager's intention to remain some time at the hall, and without containing a single word on any other subject. This was even still more mysterious than the sudden alteration in the conduct

of the earl, while it seemed to spring from the same cause. It grieved and it vexed her, and affected her best thoughts and calmest moments with inquietude and despondency. She felt sometimes as if she had been abandoned to solitude and suffering; and though conscious that she had committed no crime to entail so bitter a punishment, she confessed to herself that she had been perhaps too late in considering that the preservation of a husband's love is often the most difficult, as it is always the most delicate duty of a wife.

When the danger had been absent four days, a servant came from the hall to make some addition to her wardrobe; and from him his unfortunate mistress heard that it was doubtful when she would return. She also learned that the earl had been informed by his mother that she was at Elderbower. All this was incomprehensible, and turned her pillow into thorns. Flounce, who saw her anxiety, and guessed something of her thoughts, exerted her utmost powers of talk and tattle to amuse her, without effect; at last she proposed they should make an excursion to see the orphan. "It is such a beauty," said Flounce—"has the most charming eyes—it will do your poor heart good to see the pretty dear. Besides, it is but twelve miles off—we can go there in the morning, and whisk back to dinner with all the ease in the world."

The countess was not in a disposition to controvert the exhortation of Flounce; and accordingly a post-chaise was ordered, and the lady, attended only by her waiting-gentlewoman, set off to visit the child of the Rose and Crown.

The sale at the castle had lasted several days, but it was all over before they arrived, and the mansion shut up.

After amusing herself for a few minutes with the infant Monimia, whose beauty certainly did not appear to have been exaggerated by Flounce, the countess strayed into the Castle-park alone, leaving Flounce to gossip with Mrs Peony. The day was remarkably fine for the season, and the spring was in full verdure; but there was a solemnity in the woods, all marked for the axe of the feller, and a silence in the venerable mansion, every window being closed—that touched the heart of the solitary with inexpressible sadness. She walked round the walls,

and looked for some time at a number of swallows, which, as if informed that the house would be long untenanted, had that morning begun to build their nests in several of the window corners.

As she was indulging the train of reflections which this little incident awakened, she saw a gentleman pass hurriedly across the lawn, and enter a small gate in the garden-wall, which she had not before noticed. His figure was familiar to her; but the rapidity of his pace, and the intervention of the boughs of the shrubbery prevented her from seeing him distinctly.

There was something in his air and haste which startled her; and a sentiment more deserving the name of interest than curiosity, led her to follow him to the gate which he had left open. On looking in, she was surprised at the beauty of the garden, but her eye speedily searched around for the stranger;—he was, however, nowhere to be seen.

As she was standing with the door in her hand, she observed a puff of smoke rise from behind the corner of a conservatory; and immediately after, the stranger rush from the same place, with a pistol in his hand. His appearance left her in no doubt that he meditated a desperate deed against himself; and prompted by the irresistible impulse of the moment, she darted forward and snatched the weapon from his hand. In the same instant she recognised in him Mr Ferrers, the unfortunate owner of the castle. He also knew her, and exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven!—Lady Sandycroft here!"

A brief conversation followed. He declared himself utterly ruined—all his friends had deserted him, and he had none left but death—no home but the grave. Her ladyship was excessively shocked; she trembled from head to foot; and still holding the pistol, implored him to desist from his dreadful intent.

"Alas, madam!" cried the frantic man, "you may as well tell him who is expiring of a fever, not to die. Despair is my disease; and I am as much its victim as the leper that perishes of malady in an hospital. I have stooped to beggary—I have scarcely refrained from crime; but all has been of no avail. A curse is upon me, and misery in my blood. It is inhuman, lady, to break thus upon the secret horrors of a dying wretch. Leave

me—O leave me, Lady Sandysford, to my fate!"—And he made an effort to seize the pistol again; but she had the presence of mind, though agitated beyond the power of speaking, to plunge it into a pond, where the gardeners filled their watering-pans.

Ferrers, on seeing this action, started back, and said in a voice that was seemingly calm, but awfully emphatic, "I have heard or read, that, sometimes in those black moments when all chance of help deserts the hope and reason of man, Providence is pleased to manifest its power and watchfulness. Has it sent you to save me from perdition?" And in saying these words, he knelt and kissed her hand with the reverence and awe of adoration.

In this crisis, the dowager Lady Sandysford, leaning on the arm of Dr Trefoil, entered the garden; but, on seeing this scene, immediately withdrew. The old lady recognised her daughter-in-law, and, without uttering a word, hurried back to her carriage, which stood at the entrance to the park. The doctor, who was unacquainted with the countess, made several attempts, as they hastened back, to break the consternation of the dowager, by joking on their mal-intrusion; but she fearfully silenced him by wildly shaking her head.

On reaching the carriage, he handed her in, and then took a seat beside her.

"Where shall we drive?" said the servant, as he shut the door.

"Home, home, home, to Chastington."

The countess, unconscious of the evil construction that was perhaps naturally enough put upon the situation in which she had been discovered, retreated from the impassioned gratitude of Ferrers, and hastened back to the Rose and Crown, where she learned, with extreme vexation, that the Dowager Lady Sandysford had been there with a gentleman anxiously enquiring for the orphan.

"I do believe," said the landlady, as she communicated this news, "they have come from Chastington on purpose, and I dare say they will be back presently; for the nurse, with your maid, is walking in Rooksborough Park with the child, where they have gone to seek her. I happened to be out of the way

when her ladyship arrived, and she asked, I am told, very earnestly to see me."

While they were speaking, the nurse, with Flounee and Monimia, were seen coming quickly towards the inn. Flounee had recognized the carriage and livery from a distance, and was hastening to ascertain the cause of so unexpected a phenomenon, when she saw it drive suddenly away.

The spirits of the countess were exhausted by the painful trial to which her feelings had been subjected; a presentiment of misfortune oppressed her heart; and during the greatest part of the journey back to Elderbower, she seldom exchanged words with Flounee. They were indeed half way before any thing occurred to move her from the melancholy abstraction into which she had fallen. It happened, however, that on reaching the cross-roads, where the branch that led past Chastington diverges, they met the London coach, on the outside of which, covered with dust, sat our hero, on his way to the hall.

"As I live," exclaimed Flounee, "if there be not that Dutch nut-cracker, the Scotch creature, flying away on the top of the coach. Where can he be going to wink and twinkle, and snap his fingers, till he makes the sides ache again?"

"I wish," said the countess, "I had stopped him;" and she added, with a sigh, "Can he be on his way to Chastington?" She then relapsed into her melancholy reflections, thinking it probable the earl was entertaining company, and had invited Andrew to amuse them. "In what," thought she to herself, "is this singular solitariness of mine to end? Can it be possible that some one has poisoned the ear of Sandysford, and that he has converted his mother to believe the suspicion? That vile paragraph he seemed to think true. Has the author of the malignant invention had access to him? Can Sandysford condemn me without a hearing, without proof, without investigation? No matter, I will droop my head in secret; and whatever may have been my faults hitherto—for all that heartlessness with which I have been so often taunted, perhaps justly—I may yet die of a broken heart. I feel that I can."

While these painful reflexions were vibrating in her mind, the carriage arrived at Elderbower. On alighting, she walked

directly to the dowager's parlour, where dinner was immediately served up. She felt herself, however, so much indisposed that, instead of sitting down to table, she retired to her own room, and surrendered herself to the most desponding reflections. Bred up in the preserves of dignified opulence, she had never before seen the anguish of mental distress in any undisguised form, nor could she till then comprehend the horrors which ruin and poverty presented to a mind of such a feverish temperament as that of Ferrers. Her life, till the occurrences arose of which we have been treating, had been one continued series of the most ordinary transactions that befall persons of her rank and condition. She had passed from the fondling embraces of the nursery to the measured and circumspect regulations of her governess, and from these to the incense of public admiration, under the auspices of her accomplished husband. She had never till now come into actual contact with the world, nor been once obliged to draw on those innate resources which she possessed within herself, against its malice, or the vicissitudes of fortune. She had heard of suffering and of sorrow, had wept over afflictions described in novels, and sighed over sorrows deplored in poetry; but the real nature of either she had never known; and what she felt for the distress of the wretched Ferrers was as new in sensation as it was disagreeable.

While she was thus indulging her feelings, a messenger arrived from Burisland Abbey, her father's seat in that neighbourhood, with a letter from the marquis, in which his lordship expressed his regret that she should have exposed herself to the mortification of being abandoned by the Dowager Lady Sandford; hoped she was in good health; informed her that his own seat, Bretonsfield Castle, was in readiness to receive her; advised her to remove thither immediately, and to write him what she wished done; for that he was obliged to return to London on public business of the utmost consequence, the second reading of the County Prison Bill being fixed for the day following.

The mind and feelings of the countess were so much occupied with her own agitated reflections, that the style and contents of this paternal epistle did not at first make any particular impression, and she read it as Hamlet did the words. She saw the

forms of the alphabet, the outlines of the page; she knew the hand-writing, and the sense floated before her; but when she laid the paper on the table the whole was forgotten, and she remained for some time ruminating and abstracted, till a flood of tears came to her relief.

When the emotion of weeping had subsided, her eye accidentally fell on her father's letter, and she immediately took it up, and read it again. The coldness of the language smote her heart, and she felt as if the barb of an icy arrow had penetrated her bosom, on reading the expression, "Abandoned by the dowager."

She rung the bell with an eager hand, and ordered the carriage to be instantly ready for the Abbey. She drove thither in a state little short of distraction; but, on arriving at the gate, was informed that the marquis had three hours before set off for London. She had still his letter in her hand, and her first thought was to proceed immediately to Chastington; but, changing her determination, she unfortunately went on through the park to the Abbey, where she alighted, and requested that one of the servants might immediately prepare to go to the hall for her, on business of the utmost consequence. Having given these orders, she wrote a note to the dowager, inclosing the marquis's letter, and simply requesting an explanation of its contents.

The groom was in readiness with his horse at the door, almost as soon as this brief note was sealed, and he instantly set off. He reached the hall while the dowager was dressing for dinner, after her return from the excursion with the doctor, and the note was delivered to her in her own room. She read it hastily, and also that of the marquis, and immediately folding them up in the agitation of the moment, and with a trembling hand, she wrote two lines, simply saying, that the occasion of Lady Sandyford's visit to Castle Rooksborough, and her clandestine interview with Mr Ferrers in the garden there, would sufficiently explain the reason of her abandonment.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OUTSIDE TRAVELLING.

NEAR the great gate that led to Chastington Hall stood a small public-house—the Sandyford Arms; it was about a quarter of a mile from the village, and had been established chiefly for the accommodation of the servants of visitors, and of the labourers employed in the grounds. At this house the London coaches were in the practice of stopping to deliver letters or parcels, as the case happened to be; but in the opinion of the passengers, to enable the drivers to regale themselves in the morning with a glass of rum and milk, and in the evening with a draught of ale. Here our hero, in due time, after passing the countess, was set down from the top of a coach which left London the preceding day, but so covered with dust that a fellow passenger of the sister isle declared that if he was a potatoe he might grow without any other planting.

Andrew, on alighting, procured materials for washing, and changed his dress; and as Mrs Tapper, the landlady, was an agreeable talkative matron, he bespoke a bed, conditionally however. "I would like vera weel, mistress, to bide wi' you," said he; "and maybe I may do sae, so ye'll hae the considerateness to keep a bed, at least till I come back from the hall; but if I shouldna happen to come back before twelve o'clock at night, or sae, ye needna expec me."

The truth was, that he counted on being invited to take up his abode at the hall; but in case of disappointment, took this method of having another string to his bow.

When he had equipped himself in the wonted style in which he was in the practice of visiting at Sandyford-house in London, he proceeded up the grand avenue to the portal of the mansion. But as he approached nearer and nearer, and the spacious and richly adorned front, with the numerous gilded spires, pinnacles, and domes dilated in his view, his wonted confidence began to fail, and he experienced a feeling of diffidence that had never to

an equal degree affected him before. He wondered what could be the matter with himself, considering how intimately acquainted he was with the earl. In a word, he felt as abashed and out of sorts, as a young nobleman does in going to court for the first time, although assured of a gracious reception, both from his personal knowledge of the monarch, and acquaintance with the principal attendants.

When he reached the portal, the gate was open, and the porter was absent, so that he entered in quest of a door to knock at, or a bell to ring; but before he had advanced many paces, the porter came to him (an old corpulent, and somewhat testy as well as proud, personage) and gruffly enquired what he wanted.

"I am come frae London," replied Andrew, still under the repressive influence of the genius of that magnificent mansion, "on business wi' my lord."

Peter Baton, the porter, surveyed him from head to foot, and thought there was not much of the arrogance of a gentleman in his look or garb; and his face had the tinge of a rustic exposure to the weather—the effect of his outside travelling.

"My lord is out, young man, a-riding, and it will be some time before he returns; you may therefore step into the servants' hall and rest yourself. There is plenty of good ale for all strangers."

This was said in a more civil tone by Baton, in consequence of the humility of Andrew's appearance.

Our hero, however, did not accept of the hospitable recommendation, but replied, "I'm vera much obliged to you; but I'll just dauner about in the policy till the earl comes in, as my concern's wi' himsel'."

At this crisis, however, his lordship rode into the court, and instantly recognized him with all his usual jocularly, which sent honest Peter Baton to his post grumbling, wondering who the devil that queer chap could be, and concluding in his own mind that he must be some apprentice to one of the Jew money-lenders, for whom the woods were so rapidly thinning.

The moment that Andrew was in the presence of the master, his habitual ease returned; and, having entered into the library with

the earl, gave his lordship such a description of his adventures in the journey from town, as effectually cleared, as the earl himself expressed it, the duckweed from his stagnant thoughts.

"If your lordship," said Andrew, "has never travelled on the tap o' a coach by night, I wouldna advise you to try't; for although I cannily placed myself between an Irishman and an auld wife, in the hope that the tane would keep me awake by his clavers, and the other by her clatter, and so save me frae coupling aff, a' was naething, even wi' my own terrors free gratis, to haud me frae nodding as if my head had been an ill sew't on button; and the warst o' a' was, the deevil o' an Irishman, though he was sitting on the very lip o' the roof, he had nae mercy, but fell asleep as sound as a tap the moment his tongue lay, and was every noo and then getting up wi' a great flaught of his arms, like a goose wi' its wings jumping up a stair, alarming us a' as if he was in the act o' tumbling down aneath the wheels. And then the carlin, she grippit wi' me like grim death at every joggle the coach gied; so that if, by ony mischance, she had been shoogled aff, whar would I hae been then? It's really, my lord, an awfu' thing to travel by night on the tap o' a coach."

"True, Wylie; but why did not ye take the inside?" said the earl.

Andrew did not choose to confess the real saving cause, considering the liberal provision his lordship had procured for him; but, evading the question, replied, "It's no every ane, my lord, that can thole the inside o' a coach, especially the forescat that draws backward."

"Ay; but what prevented you from taking the other?" cried his lordship, who correctly guessed the true reason of the preference for the outside.

"Ye may weel say that, my lord; but I thought the outside would hae been vera pleasant; and, indeed, naething could be mair sae, as we came trindling along in the dewy eye o' the morning, smelling the caller air frae the blithsome trees and hedges, a' buskit in their new cleeding, like lads and lasses dressed for a bridal."

"Poetical, by all that's marvellous!" exclaimed the earl at this sally; "there is no exhausting the incomprehensible treasury

of thy accomplishments. Sidney and Crichton were as the million compared to thee."

Andrew assumed an extremely well-feigned seriousness, and replied, "I ken your lordship's joking way; but whatever may happen, I trust and hope I'll ne'er be ony sic thing. Poeticals, my lord, are like heather flourishes—a profitless bloom—bred in the barren misery o' rocks and moorlan's. Na, na, my lord, I'm like the piper's cow, gie me a pickle pen-strae, and sell your wind for siller. That's the precept I preach; and I wadna, my lord, after my journey, be the waur o' a bit fodder just noo."

Lord Sandysford was not altogether deceived by this whimsical speech; but he rang the bell, and ordered in some refreshment. "My mother," said he, "is with me at present, and we must wait dinner for her. By the way, as she's one of the old school, you must be a little on your p and q's."

"Unless," replied Andrew, "she's greatly out o' the common, I dare say I'll be able to put up wi' her."

"That I don't doubt; but perhaps she may not be disposed to put up with you. Ladies of a certain age, you know, will have their own way."

"Ay, my lord, leddies o' a' ages would fain hae their ain way, an' we would let them. Howsever, I dare say, the auld countess is nae sic a camstrarie commoditie as may be ye think. If I ance get her to laugh wi' me, I'll maybe gar her do mair—for the young leddy, that was aye as mim as a May puddock to a' the lave o' mankind, made me, ye ken, just a pet."

The earl's countenance changed; and rising from the sofa, into which he had carelessly thrown himself, walked several times in silence across the room. Our hero observed his emotion, and sensible of having gone too far to retreat, added, "Gratitude, my lord, has tied up my fortune wi' your favour, and you maun allow me to speak o' her leddyship as I feel. She's a woman o' a powerfu' capacity, but needs cooking."

His lordship stopped, and, knitting his brows, looked sternly on Andrew.

"I'm no gi'en to gambling, my lord; but I would," cried our hero, "wager a boddle to a bawbee, that, although your lordship's aye in the right, my leddy's no far wrang."

This upset the earl's austerity completely, and, turning on his heel, he laughingly said, "Then you think me, Wylie, somewhat of a pertinacious character—too strict with my wife."

"Just so, my lord—I think ye were overly strict in taking your ain way, without reflecting how it might affec' her. Nae doubt your lordship was in the right—ye were privileged to do so. But what I would uphold on behalf of the absent leddy, poor woman, is, that she was nae far wrang, since ye did sae, to tak a' wee jookie her ain gait too. My lord, you and her maun gree."

"Impossible, impossible, Wylie!" exclaimed the earl, not displeased at the advocacy which our hero seemed disposed to plead in behalf of the countess. And he then explained to him the mystery of the child, and that his object in sending for him was, that he might assist in ascertaining the facts and circumstances. Andrew listened with no inconsiderable degree of amazement. He, however, allowed no remark to escape, but thought that there might be some mistake in the statement, or some error in the conception.

When his lordship concluded—for he spoke with agitation, and with much energy of feeling—our hero said, with unaffected sincerity, "My best services are at the command of your lordship. It is my duty to serve you—it is my interest, my lord; and that is the plainest way I can tak to assure your lordship that I'll do the part of an honest man and a true servant. But, my lord, I'll neither hae colleague nor portioner. Your lordship's leddy-mother, and the doctor, who have gone to the inns, may hook a baukie-bird in the air, or a yerd taid on the brack, and think they hae catched a fish, and they may catch a right fish too. Ye'll let me, however, my lord, cast my ain tackle in the water, saying naithing to them till we compare the upshot."

Before the earl could reply, the carriage, with the doctor and the dowager, was heard in the court; and in little more than a minute after, her ladyship, leaning on his arm, agitated and depressed, entered the library.

Andrew perceived that they had caught, as he anticipated, either a baukie-bird or a yerd taid, and brought it home for a fish; but he said nothing. The dowager, on observing a

stranger in the room, immediately retired, followed by the earl. The moment they were gone, and the door shut, our hero sidled up to the little prim physician, and without preface, said at once to him, "Noo, sir, wha' hae ye got by this gowk's errand?"

Dr Trefoil started aghast, and bending forward, looked as if he examined some reptile of which he was afraid. He then resumed his wonted erect and precise air, saying, "May I presume to ask whom I have the honour to address, and to what you allude?"

Andrew, whose quick insight of character was instinctive, saw the self-sufficiency of the doctor, and determined to take the upper hand of him, replied, "Ye're speaking to Andrew Wylie, sir. I dinna think there's mickle honour in't; and what I was asking anent, is the affair of my lord and my leddy, that ye hae been thrashing the water and raising bells about."

"I do not understand you, sir," said the doctor, somewhat confounded. "But if you mean what has been the result of my journey with the countess-dowager to Castle Rooksborough, I regret to say that it has been attended with most unhappy effects. Her ladyship and I happened to stroll into the garden, where we discovered the unfortunate Lady Augusta Spangle—for she can no longer now be called the Countess of Sandysford"—

"Hoot, toot, toot, doctor; no sae fast, no sae fast," interrupted Andrew. "What did ye see?"

"We saw her and Mr Ferrers in a most unpleasant situation."

"Noo, Dr Trefoil," replied Andrew, "but that I ken ye're mista'en, I could wager, as sure as ony thing, that there's a wee spicerie of I'll no say what in this. O doctor! it would hae been mair to the purpose, had ye been kirning drogs with the pistle and mortar in your ain shop, than gallanting frae Dan to Beersheba with an auld prickmaleerie dowager, to pick holes in the coats o' our neighbours."

"Sir, your figures and insinuations are insulting," cried the doctor, reddening into valour.

"Dr Trefoil, I'll tell you something that ye'll maybe no be ill pleased to learn. I'm no a game-cock. The deadliest weapon that I ever handle is a doctor's bottle; so that your whuffing

and bouncing are baith ill-war't on me. Keep your temper, doctor; keep your temper, or ye may lose your appetite for my lord's dinner. Howsever, I forgie you for this bit spunk of your bravery, and I doubt not but we shall hy-and-by be couthy frien's, though we will differ on twa points—that's certain. I'll ne'er allow that physie hasna an abominable taste; and some better evidence than your seven senses, my man, maun be forthcoming, before I credit this story o' the twa ghosts that you and the poor feckless auld leddy saw at Castle Rooksborough."

"Ghosts!" cried the doctor, utterly amazed at the self-possession of his companion.

"Ay, ghosts, doctor; and I'm thinking they hae been twa o' your ain patients, they hae gi'en you sic a dreadful fear. What did they say to you, and what said ye to them?"

"Sir, you very much astonish me—exceedingly. I know not that I ever met with any thing like this. Sir, the countess-dowager knew Lady Sandysford at the first sight, and I could be in no mistake with respect to Mr Ferrers, whom I have known from his childhood."

"A' that may be true, Dr Trefoil. I'll no dispute that the countess-dowager was able to ken her gude-dochter, and that ye can decipher the difference between Mr Ferrers and a bramble-bush. But, doctor, what did ye see? That's the point—a gentleman and a leddy in a garden, picking lilies for a poesy. O doctor, doctor! ye maun be an ill-deedy body yoursel', or ye wouldna think sae ill o' others. What, no, was you and the auld leddy after, when ye were linking and slinking sae cagily wi' ane anither in holes and corners?—

Davy chas't me through the pease,
And in amang the cherry-trees.'

Ah, doctor, doctor, ye deevil! Vow but ye're a Dainty Davy."

The manner in which this was said and sung overpowered the doctor, and, in spite of himself, he was compelled to laugh. In the same moment the bell of the portal summoned them to dinner.

CHAPTER XXXV

CONVERSATION.

ANDREW and the doctor, on reaching the dining-room, found the earl and his mother already there. The dowager was somewhat surprised at the uncouth appearance of Andrew; and his lordship was evidently amused at the look with which she inspected him. At first, and for some time, the conversation was vague and general; but the earl saw that Andrew was studiously cultivating the good graces of the old lady, and that, although every now and then she looked at him stately and askance, occasionally both his manners and language deranged the settled seriousness of her features into a smile.

When the dessert was placed on the table, and the servants had retired, our hero opened his battery, by saying to the earl, "What do you think your leddy-mother here, and my new friend the dainty doctor there, hae been about, my lord?"

Her ladyship was in the act of holding her glass while the doctor poured a little wine into it; but at the nonchalance of this address she withdrew her hand, and erected herself into the stateliest pitch of dignity; and the physician setting down the decanter, his task unperformed, looked across the table in unspeakable amazement. His lordship smiled, and replied, "Why, Wylie, how should I know? I dare say something they don't like to hear of, if I may judge by their looks."

"Weel, I'll tell you, resumed Andrew. "Now, my leddy, ye maun just compose yoursel'; for it's vera proper his lordship should hear how you and the doctor were playing at Damon and Phillis among the groves and bowers. They think, my lord, that they saw your leddy gallanting wi' a gentleman."

"Monster!" exclaimed the dowager, flaming with indignation. The doctor was panic-struck.

"Whisht, whisht, my leddy," cried Andrew, slyly; "if you will be poking at a business of this kind, ye maun just abide the consequences. But I would ask what greater harm could there be in the countess walking in a garden with a well-bred gentle-

man, than in your leddyship doing the same with that bit body o' a doctor?"

The earl perceiving the turn that the conversation was taking, and knowing from Andrew's manner that the truth would be served up without any disguise, he was uneasy and disconcerted, and almost wished that the topic was changed. But anxious at the same time to learn the whole circumstances, and curious to know the point of light in which it struck our hero, he remained, as it were, seemingly absent and inattentive, making a Niobe's face of an orange, and squeezing it, "all tears," into his glass.

Andrew continued,—“I have always heard, Liddy Sandysford, that ye were a wise and a sensible woman; but I would ask you a question:—Granted noo that ye did see a decent woman like the countess—but like's an ill mark—would it no hae been mair to the purpose to hae made sure, in the first place, that it was really her? and in the second, to have enquired at herself on the spot what she was doing there? Na, my leddy, this is a serioas concern, and the truth must be borne wi'; to come away without searching it to the bottom, wasna according to your wonted discretion; and if ye hadna been inoculated wi' a bad opinion of your good-dochter beforehand, ye wouldna hae put sic an ill colour on what may have been in itself a very comely action.”

The doctor by this time had in some degree recovered himself; and the freedom with which Andrew spoke having an infectious influence on him, said, “But, sir, you forget that there is a child in the case.”

The dowager, however, who had sat some time in a state of consternation, interrupted the conversation, exclaiming, “Lord Sandysford, how can you permit this at your table, and in my presence?”

“Why,” replied the earl, “I'm afraid there is something like reason in what Wylie says: he is a being of a strange element, and your ladyship must endure to hear him out, or you will perhaps do both his wit and his wisdom injustice.”

Andrew discovered that he had gone too far with the circum-spect dowager. He had treated her with a sort of freedom that could only have been used with impunity to the whist-table

tabbies of London; those whom he occasionally met with, and, as he said, touzled their decorum. But his natural shrewd perception of character soon enabled him to correct the error, and to adapt his conversation much more to the dowager's formal notions of etiquette and delicacy.

"I'll tell you what it is, my leddy," said he; "from the first to the last there has been a great misunderstanding in the whole business between my lord and the countess; I could see that long ago, though I hae but twa een, and nae better anes than my neighbours. They have wanted a sincere friend between them, the like o' your leddyship, for example; and noo that they're hither and yon frae ane anither, it behoves a' that wish them weel, and few hae mair cause to do sae than mysel', who has been made, as it were, by my lord, to take tent that a breach is no opened that canna be biggit up. Joking aside—I think your leddyship and the doctor hae been a wee hasty in your conclusions. I'll no say that the countess is an innocent woman, but let us hae some proof o' her guilt before we condemn. As to the bairn, that's a living witness of a fact somewhere—I alloo that. But, my leddy, I'll tell you what I'll do; that is, if ye approve it, for I would submit to your better judgment. I'll gang warily and cannily ower to Castle Rooksborough mysel', and muddle about the root o' this affair till I get at it. I think that I may be able to do this as weel as a person o' mair consideration. Naebody in this country side kens me; I'll be scoggit wi' my ain hamely manner; and if I can serve my lord, I'm bound by gratitude to do sae."

After some further conversation this project was approved of, and the dowager began to entertain a more condescending disposition towards our hero.

The carriage was ordered to be ready to convey him early next morning to the Rose and Crown; but, said he, "No just sae far; I maun gang there on shanks-naigy; I'll only tak it till within a mile or twa o' the place; and when I hae got my turn done I'll either come slipping back, or the servan's can, at their leisure, bring the carriage on to the inns, whar I'll get in as an utter stranger, taken up by them, as it were, for a job to themselves."

The aristocracy of the dowager did not entirely relish this method of setting on foot an enquiry into the conduct of a Countess of Sandysford. But Andrew combated her prejudices so adroitly, and in so peculiar a manner, that she was forced to acquiesce.

"It's no for me, certainly," said he, "to enter into a controversy with your leddyship on points o' this nature; but ye hae lived ouer good a life to ken ony thing about the jookerie-cookerie o' crim coning."

The dowager's face, which had for some time worn a complacent aspect, became again troubled at this renewal of a familiarity so little in harmony with her habits and notions; but having sat her due lady's portion of time at the table, she rose and left the room. The earl also soon after retired, leaving the doctor and Andrew by themselves: the physician, however, was so effectually mastered by the irresistible humour of his companion, that, dreading to encounter his raillery, under the pretext of professional engagements, he rose and went home before tea was announced.

Our hero being thus left alone, pondered on the circumstances which had procured to him the confidence of Lord Sandysford, and the promptings of his own honest persuasion made him determine to leave no effort untried to restore the domestic happiness of his patron. In frequenting the parties at Sandysford House, and in the course of the familiar access which he was allowed at all times both to the earl and countess, he had noticed the cold politeness which existed between them; but he formed an estimate of their respective dispositions much more correct than that of the world in general. He discovered, through the disguise of his lordship's habitual ennui, a gnawing anxiety, and justly ascribed his dissipation to the irritation of his embittered reflections. The equable and sustained deportment of her ladyship was not, however, so easily penetrated; but he saw that it was more the effect of practice and caution, than her natural disposition, and suspected that she possessed an inherent energy, which only required commensurate circumstances to call into action. She was evidently a woman not easily disturbed by the little occasional incidents which so profoundly affect the happi-

ness of her sex; and her feelings having no particular object to interest them, neither children, nor, in a certain sense, husband, she moved along the stream of time like a stately vessel on the tide, whose superb appearance is all that attracts the attention of the spectator.

Her ladyship was certainly to blame for not endeavouring to recall the scattered affections of her lord; nor is it easy to frame an apology for her negligence in this respect. But how many ladies act in the same way, and, heedless of the unsettled and fluctuating state of all human attachments, seem to consider, when they are wedded, that it is no longer requisite to continue those agreeable humours and graces which first won the esteem of their husbands. The triumph of woman lies not in the admiration of her lover, but in the respect of her husband; and it can only be gained by a constant cultivation of those qualities which she knows he most values. But Lady Sandysford, like many of her sex, had been taught to entertain other notions. She did not certainly regulate herself, as some others, fatally for their own happiness, often do, by the standard of some particular individual, whom habit or duty may have taught them to venerate—a father, a brother, or a guardian; but she did what was equally unfortunate—she courted public admiration, and it was with deference towards it that all her actions and motions were estranged from that sphere of duties which would have endeared her to the sensitive bosom of her lord. Our hero, therefore, in contemplating the result which had flowed from her apparent indifference, suspected that she felt infinitely more under the separation than the earl conceived.

He did her also justice in another point: he could not for a moment allow himself to think she was guilty even of levity. He had remarked her pride, and his intuitive knowledge of human nature convinced him, that pride alone will often do the part of virtue. In a word, the tenor of his cogitations were honourable to himself and favourable to the countess. For, not assuming the probability of guilt, but only desirous to reach the bottom of the business, he was able to take a far more candid view of the different presumptions against her, than if he had been actuated by any preconceived opinion. In this generous

frame of mind, he embarked with a determination to sift the whole matter to the utmost, and, in the end, if he found the conduct of the countess what he hoped and expected it would prove, he resolved to speak to her freely of what he had observed in her behaviour towards her husband, and then to bring about the more difficult and delicate task of a cordial reunion.

When the mind entertains a noble purpose, it never fails to dignify the physiognomy and external appearance. Andrew, in obeying the summons of the dowager to tea, entered the room with an ease of carriage which struck her, not only on account of its propriety, but also by the contrast which it presented to his naturally insignificant air and homely garb.

Her ladyship, in the interval after quitting the dining-room, was not, upon reflection, much satisfied with what had passed, and was resolved to be both cool and dignified, in order to prevent a repetition of the familiarity which had so ruffled her notions of decorum; but the generosity which lighted up the smooth round face and little twinkling eyes of her guest, produced an instantaneous and sympathetic effect; and instead of the austere grandeur which she had determined to practise, she invited him to take a seat on the sofa beside her, with a graciousness of manner that could not have been excelled, even had she known the intention with which he was at the moment animated.

When the earl, who soon after entered the room, saw them in this situation, his favourable opinion of the tact and address of Andrew was considerably increased. He knew the nice notions of his mother, and her profound veneration for the etiquettes of polite life, and had, from the first, apprehended a rupture, the state of her mind at the time not being at all in unison with that familiar drollery which our hero could neither disguise nor repress. He was, therefore, in no small degree surprised to find them seated together, and apparently on those terms which he had never imagined it was practicable for Andrew to attain with her ladyship.

During tea the conversation was general and lively: no allusion was made to what had constituted the chief and most interesting topic after dinner; and the old lady was several times

constrained to laugh heartily at Andrew's ludicrous adventures in his journey from London, as well as at some of his queerest stories, of which he selected those most calculated to please her; so that, while she perceived he was a person of no refined acquirements, she could not but acknowledge in her own mind that he was undoubtedly endowed by nature with singular shrewdness, and with peculiar talents of no ordinary kind. It was true, that he said things which a delicate respect for the prejudices and notions of others would have restrained a man of more gentlemanly pretensions from expressing; but there was no resisting the strong common sense of his remarks, nor withstanding the good-humoured merriment of his allusions. She, however, now and then felt uneasy that she had so rashly sent back the countess's letter. But like all others who do any thing of which they afterwards doubt the propriety, she concealed entirely from her son, and wished, if possible, to forget herself, that she had taken so decided a part.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NEW LIGHTS.

"I FEAR, my lord," said our hero, when the dowager had left the room, "that I have spoken over freely on this misfortune that has befallen your lordship's family; but in truth, my lord, a sore at no time will bear handling. If I had conversed in a manner that might have been more fitting to the occasion, it wouldna hae mended the matter; so I rather ran the risk of the consequences with your leddy-mother, than be slack in delivering my honest opinion. But setting joking aside, my lord, this story of hers and the doctor's concerning the gentleman ayont the bush, is really something vera extraordinary."

"Yes, Wylie," replied the earl, "it is so; but although my mother makes it of importance, it is none to me. I have been but so so as a husband: and, by my conscience, nothing in earth

will ever induce me to institute any proceedings against Lady Sandyford."

"That's a vera contrite sentiment of your lordship, and comes, or I'm mista'en, from the bottom of the heart; but surely, my lord, ye wouldna like your estates, and the honours of all your lordship's ancient and famous progenitors, to go to the base blood of a stranger."

"I thought, Wylie," said the earl coldly, "that you had been more the friend of Lady Sandyford. I am sure that she always treated you with kindness."

"With the height of discretion, I maun aye allow that," replied our hero; "and far be it from my thoughts or intent to advise any harm either to the name or dignity of the countess, whom I canna believe to have been playing ony plasket. A' that I meant your lordship to understand was, supposing, just by way of premises to confer upon, that the countess had done the deed, and was as black as your leddy-mother and her gallant the doctor fear, how would your lordship propose that she should be treated?"

"As the daughter of the Marquis of Avonside."

"Her father is a proud man, my lord," resumed Andrew, "and will take care of that. But suppose she is the mother of the bairn—for to this length the suspicion, as I guess, runs—what would be your lordship's pleasure then?"

The earl made no answer. He sat for some time silent; and then he rose and walked thrice across the room. He was evidently grieved and perplexed. Wylie sat watching him with interest and sympathy.

The struggle lasted about five minutes, at the end of which his lordship resumed his chair, and said, "I cannot tell you what I may do, nor can I imagine what I ought to do. But Lady Sandyford, whatever may have been her fault, has pride enough to prevent her from imposing a spurious heir on my earldom. The concealment with which she has covered the birth, if she is a mother, assures me that the attempt will never be made; so that, even in a worldly point of view, I ought to make no stir in this business." And he sighed deeply, adding "It is needless

to disguise to you any longer, that I am more distressed than I seem."

"Really, my lord, your case is a very kittle ane," replied our hero, deeply affected; "but no to dwell on the dark side o't, let us suppose noo, that after all this hobleshow and clash, it should turn out that the countess is an innocent and an injured woman."

"You are destined to exalt or to sink me for ever, in my own esteem!" exclaimed the earl; "and you have put to me a question that I would, but durst not, ask myself. She left my house voluntarily, by the advice of her father."

His lordship paused, and looked as if he expected that Andrew would say something; but he remained silent.

The earl then said abruptly, "What do you think I ought to do? I cannot ask her back—she will be happier apart from me; and, since we are in the tongues of the world, it is no longer expedient for us to assume counterfeit virtues."

"Truly, what your lordship says is no without a glimmer or common sense; but in the way of a conjecture, let us take another supposition. What would your lordship do, if my leddy, of her own free grace, was to confess a fault for running awa wi' her father, and beg to be received home again?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the earl with energy—"Impossible! Her pride could never stoop to such humiliation."

"I can see there is difficulty in the way. Howsoever, greater mountains have been removed without miracles. And your lordship hasna said what you would do, supposing my suppose were to come to pass."

"It would, I suspect, Wylie," replied the earl jocularly, "be rather an awkward meeting."

"Then you would consent to meet her leddyship?" said our hero slyly.

The earl was startled at the unconscious disclosure he had made of his own feelings, while he admired the shrewdness of his counsellor; and said, with a free and sincere accent, "Wylie, it is in vain for me to equivocate with you. I do not think the return of the countess probable; and, therefore, have never con-

sidered how I should act on such an occurrence. Towards her I can bear no malice. But you surprise me. However, I will say no more. Let this conversation, for the present, end."

"I thought," replied Andrew, with a degree of firmness which surprised the earl, "that your lordship had better notions of justice than to punish where perhaps you ought to make atonement."

His lordship, who had risen during part of this conversation, took a chair as our hero uttered these words, and looked flushed with an angry confusion.

"My lord," continued Andrew, observing his agitation, "there's none in the world hae such cause to speak the truth to your lordship as I have. You have taken me by the hand, and led me out o' the slough of poverty, where I might have struggled and sunk. Ye hae placed me in the flowery pastures of prosperity, and ye shouldna be displeased at the humble ettling of my gratitude. If my leddy has had her faults and deficiencies, your lordship's own breast bears witness that ye have not yoursel' been perfect. But I am transgressing the bounds of discretion, in speaking in this manner to your lordship. Nevertheless, my lord, though I should offend, it will be my endeavour to serve your lordship, as it is my duty to do, whatever your lordship may say to the contrary; and to strive, by all honest means, to testify my sense of obligation for the kindness heaped upon me."

The earl was petrified. There was an energy of tone, and a decision of character in this, which his lordship had never experienced towards himself, nor did he imagine Andrew possessed half so much generous sensibility.

"Do you think," replied the earl thoughtfully, "that even were I disposed to wish for a reconciliation, Lady Sandysford might be averse to it."

"I hope she has more sense, were your lordship to entertain any such creditable wish. But, my lord, she has been long an outcast, as it were, from your affections. I cannot, therefore, venture to give your lordship any reason to think that she may wish for a reconciliation. But as soon as I have made an experiment, I'll hae the greatest pleasure in letting you know the result, especially if it be favourable."

"You are too quick, Wylie," said the earl coldly, "I did not express any solicitude on the subject. Judging from the past, I still continue of the same mind, that it is better for Lady Sandyford and me to remain as we are, than to live together as we have done."

"That's no to be denied," replied Andrew. "But it's to be hoped that, were ye coming thegither again, it would be with better hopes, designs, and intents. Knowing, as ye now do, wherein the great strength of both your faults lies, ye would bear and forbear with more reciprocal indulgence. Ye couldna live the life ye have done, even though ye were both so ill-deedy as to try."

This characteristic touch made the earl smile; and he said, "You are a singular being, and will have your own way."

In saying these words, the countenance of his lordship was for a moment overcast, and the sudden flowing in of thoughts and feelings on his heart obliged him to leave the room. Andrew soon after pulled the bell, and requesting the carriage to be in readiness to convey him to Castle Rooksborough by daylight, was shown to a bed-room. But it is necessary to revert, in the mean time, to the situation of Lady Sandyford.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CASTLE.

THE countess, on sending off her letter, had returned to Elder-bower, where she received the answer; the first shock of which almost upset her reason. She started from her seat, and, wildly shaking her head and hands, ran and touched several articles in the room, as if to ascertain their reality, and that she was not in a dream. She was like a bird entangled in a snare, or a captive when first immured in his dungeon. She felt as if an invisible power, that would crush her to death, was closing in on all sides. She gasped, as if some enormous weight pressed

upon her bosom, and for several minutes her mind was as the fury of a glowing furnace.

In the midst of this paroxysm, she made a vigorous effort to control her agitation, and succeeded. While distractedly pacing the room, she halted suddenly, and said, "Why do I yield to this consternation? There is some error in all this—There is no conspiracy against me—I am innocent of the crime, imputed—I will go at once to my lord—I will relate the whole of what has happened—he has treated me as if I had no feeling—but he is a man of honour, and will not allow me to be injured unjustly."

When she had thus somewhat calmed the perturbation of her spirits, she ordered a post-chaise for Chastington Hall, and in the course of a few hours quitted Elderbower.

Before she had gained the second stage, she felt herself so much indisposed that she was obliged to stop, and go to bed. In the course of the night, however, she obtained some rest; and her spirits were so refreshed in the morning, that she arose with a cheerful alacrity to resume her journey to the residence of her husband.

After breakfast, a chaise for Chastington was accordingly ordered, and she went to the door attended by the landlord, to hand her in. As she was on the point of ascending the steps of the carriage, her hand was eagerly seized by some one behind, and on looking round she beheld, with equal surprise and alarm, the pale and ghastly Ferrers.

"Ha!" exclaimed the countess, horror-struck at his appearance; "how! when! what has brought you here?"

"I came last night, and I have been"—What he would have added was broken off by a shriek from the countess, who fainted, and fell back into his arms.

Some time elapsed before she recovered, and when she opened her eyes in the apartment to which she had been carried, the first object they caught was Servinal, her lord's valet, who, perceiving that she recognized him, instantly left the room, and having a horse ready at the door, quitted the house. He was on his way to London on some confidential business, but he returned to Chastington Hall with the news of this discovery.

As for Ferrers, still under the influence of insanity, believing he had been the cause of this unfortunate lady's death, he rushed from the house in a state of distraction, and was nowhere to be found.

When the countess was so far recovered as to be able to speak, she ordered the chaise, which still stood at the door, to carry her to Burisland Abbey, where, immediately on her arrival, she sent for Flounce; and being determined now to avail herself of her father's offer of Bretonsfield Castle, she dispatched, at the same time, one of the servants to apprize the domestics of her intention. All this was done with a force and precision of mind new to her character.

The singularity of the circumstances into which she had been placed with Ferrers, awakened in her a sort of superstitious dread. Their misfortunes seemed strangely and awfully mingled; and feeling herself unaccountably and darkly connected with the desperate fortunes of a frantic man, she believed herself a passive agent in the hands of Fate, and trembled to think that she was thus united to some tremendous and immeasurable movement of the universe. There was sublimity in the fancies that rose with this notion; and the place where she had determined to take up her abode was well calculated to cherish the solemn associations connected with her Promethean resolution, to retire from the world, and there await the issue of that scheme of destiny with which she was so mysteriously involved.

Bretonsfield Castle was a pile of unknown antiquity. From the earliest periods of our national history, it had been remarkable, both on account of its massy architecture, and the sullen and stern solitariness in which it stood. The Saxons had added to its strength, and the Normans had enlarged the sweep of the walls, and the number of the towers. In the chivalric times of the heroic Plantagenets, it acquired some ornamental appendages; and, in the first reign of the Stuarts, it lost some of the features of a mere stronghold in a suite of magnificent apartments, of an airy and fantastic style, which, however, still harmonized with the rude grandeur of the general edifice.

The road to it lay along the acclivity of an extensive common, and by a gentle ascent attained the summit of the downs, from

which, on the one hand, the country below presented a wide and magnificent prospect, extending to the horizon; while, on the other, an open and lonely waste spread out to a great distance, in which no other object was visible but the castle, rising from the midst of a dark mass of fir-trees.

The scene suited the disposition of Lady Sandysford's mind; and it seemed to her that a spot, in which the wild, the old, and the magnificent, were so united, was a fit theatre for the exercise of the courage and endurance which she was determined to exercise.

But far different were the reflections of her waiting gentlewoman; according to her own account, when the carriage reached the brow of the downs, and she saw nothing before her but a desert waste, she felt as if a magician was carrying her away on the back of a fiery dragon, to the well at the world's end.

As the carriage drove into the silent court of the castle, like a peal of thunder, the countess said, as it stopped at the entrance to the hall, "What an awful place it is!" and she cast her eyes apprehensively round on the ivy-mantled towers, the hoary walls, and the lichen-furred pinnacles.

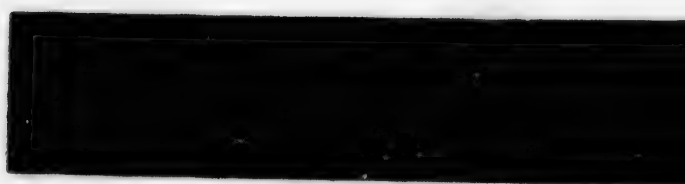
"Yes," replied Flounce.

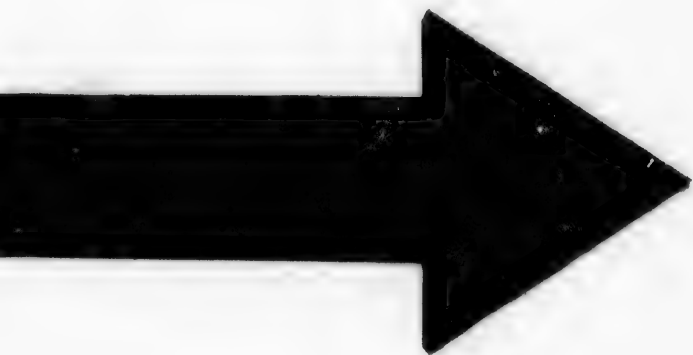
"It chills the suspended soul,
Till expectation wears the cast of fear;
And fear, half ready to become devotion,
Mumbles a kind of mental orison,
It knows not wherefore."

"Why, Flounce!" exclaimed her astonished lady, "where got you that language?"

"It is a beautiful sentiment," said that erudite gentlewoman, "which I learned by rote from one of Mrs Radcliffe's romances. It will be quite charming, my lady, to read them in this delightful Udolpho; and I hope your ladyship will make a point of having them sent from town."

As none of the servants were in attendance, the countess desired the post-boys to open the door, and, alighting with Flounce, walked into the hall. The housekeeper, and her husband the gardener, were indeed all the domestics that the Marquis of Avonside kept at this place; and it happened, when





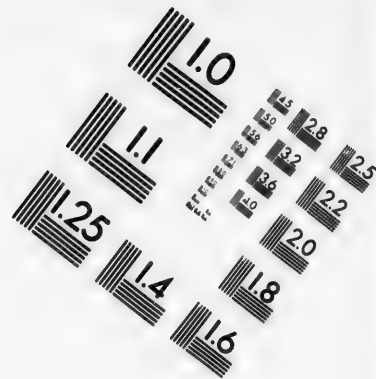
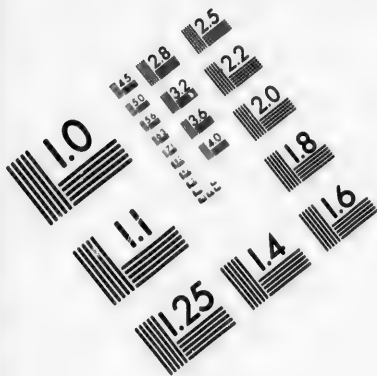
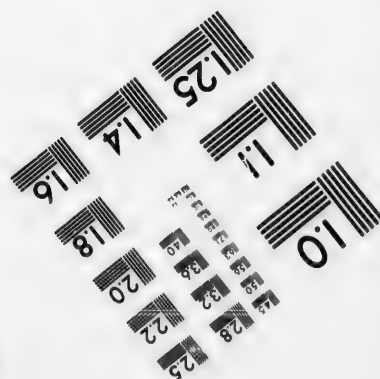
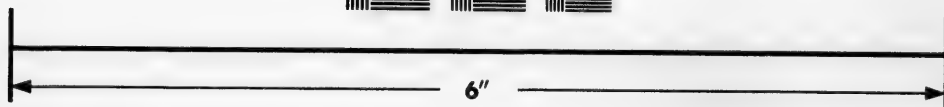
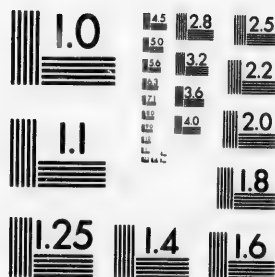


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the carriage drove up to the door, that they were in a remote part of the castle.

The countess halted when she had reached the middle of the hall, and surveyed it in silence. It was lofty, and of stately dimensions—lighted from the one side by two tall narrow windows; the space between which was occupied by a huge arched chimney, with massy antique iron dogs for burning wood; and great piles of billets at each side of the hearth, showed something like the habitude of ancient hospitality. A small claw-footed table, on which stood a basket of linen and old stockings, with a pair of scissors, a thimble, and thread-paper, lying around as they had been left by the housekeeper, occupied, with two old-fashioned gnarled elbow-chairs, the niche of one of the windows. The walls were of dark and small panelled wainscot, on which hung four or five family portraits that time had almost effaced. The aspect of the whole apartment was gaunt and venerable, but it could not be altogether said that the effect was either desolate or melancholy. But this was less owing to the style and architecture of the room, than to the superb prospect which the windows commanded. The castle stood on the brink of a shaggy precipice; and the side where the windows were placed, overlooked a wide expanse of one of the richest tracts of England, on which the sun at the time was shedding the golden radiance of the afternoon. Woodlands, parks, villas, and towns, lay scattered in beautiful diversity to the utmost verge of the horizon; and here and there the steeple of a country church pointing to heaven, might be seen rising from the middle of a grove, crowned with a glittering star, the effect of the setting sun on the gilded weathercock; while broad and bright, with all their windows glancing as if illuminated, several large mansions studded, as it were, like gems, the bosom of that magnificent landscape. "Our ancestors," said the Countess to Flounce, "did not lack taste in the choice of situations. Their captives, with such a free and spacious view before them, could scarcely feel the loss of liberty."

At this moment the old housekeeper entered; and apologizing for her accidental absence, opened a pair of folding-doors at the upper end of the hall, and conducted the countess through the

long suite of state apartments to a small drawing-room in an octagon tower, which commanded seven different views from as many small windows. "I have brought your ladyship to this place," said Mrs Scrubwell, "because it was the favourite room of the marchioness your mother; and I thought on that account you would be pleased with it."

"You have judged rightly," replied her ladyship with emotion; and she mentally ejaculated, "My mother! How wofully I now feel that loss!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

INEXPERIENCE.

AT break of day, our hero was afoot and dressed for his mission to the Rose and Crown at Castle Rooksborough; but instead of waiting for the carriage to come up to the portal of the hall, he walked out to the court of offices, which stood at some distance from the mansion.

It was a beautiful spring morning. The mavis, the black-bird, and the linnet, were beginning to chirp and churm over their young in the bowers, but the lark was already at heaven's gate singing her matins. The sun had not yet risen, and the dewdrops lay like pearls on the grass and leaves; a cheerful and refreshed composure was diffused over the whole face of the landscape, and the forehead of the sky appeared unusually spacious and beautiful; a few grey flakes of vapour scattered over it, seemed to float at an unwonted elevation, as they gradually brightened into the full glory of the morning.

The reflections of Andrew were in unison with the beneficent aspect of nature, and he loitered with the sense of beauty glowing at his heart, often turning round as the different windings of the road unfolded, through the massy groups of foliage, the diversified scenery of the surrounding country.

By the time he reached the entrance to the stables, the car-

riage was coming out. "Ha'd your han', my lad," he cried to the coachman, "ye needna gang to the house; I'll e'en step in here."

"As you please," replied the coachman; "but Tom Berry is not yet come."

"And wha's Tam Berry?"

"The footman, sir, that is to go with us."

"Loup your ways down, and let me into the chaise. I'll no be fashed wi' ony sic ceremonials. A' that I want is a fast drive, without coupling."

The coachman obeyed, and long before Tom Berry had opened the shutters of his eyes, half the journey was performed.

At a public-house within two miles of Castle Rooksborough, our hero stopped the carriage, and told the coachman to wait for him there.

"Your horses, my lad," said he, "will be nane the waur o' a rest; and I'll just step on by mysel'."

"But," replied the charioteer, "my orders were to take you to the Rose and Crown."

"I'll not dispute what your orders were; nevertheless, ye'll bide here; or if ye maun corn your cattle at the Rose and Crown, and at no other place, I canna help it, only ye'll see y' lord's turn better by minding what I bid you."

"It don't make no difference to me," said the coachman; "and so be as you doesn't wish for the contrary, I'd as lief bait where we now be."

"Heer ye," cried Andrew, stopping suddenly, after he had alighted, and was walking away, seemingly as if he had recollected something. "I hope ye'll sae naething to the folk about the inns here, concerning my business."

"I knows nought o't, sir—I was but told to fetch you here."

"Then," replied our hero, "ye'll oblige me by keeping your finger on your mouth, for it might be detrimental if any thing were to spunk out."

"Never doubt me, sir.—I have been bred and born in his lordship's service, as my father was in his father's; so I may be trusted; and I never speaks of any body's consequences, but only minds my own servitude."

"I had a notion that ye were a prudent lad," said Wylie; "what do they ca' you?"

"My name, sir, is Snaffle—Jack Snaffle."

"Weel, Jock, I hae great dependence on your sagacity, and there's a sixpence to you for a chappin o' strong yill, till I come back. But mind, and dinna say ony thing in the tap-room, when ye're drinking and smoking your pipe wi' ithers, anent my coming to speer the price o' growing trees in this neighbourhood—and noo, that I hae better thought on't, ye needna let on about my coming from the hall at a', but pass me off as a by-hand job."

The coachman being thus set upon a wrong scent, supposed that Andrew had some interest in the sale of the timber then felling at Chastington; for, not belonging to the establishment of Sandysford House in London, he knew little of the domestic concerns of the family, and nothing whatever of the footing on which our hero was treated by his master.

Having in this manner got himself extricated from the embarrassment of the carriage, Andrew walked forward to the Rose and Crown alone, and upon his arrival, instead of going into the house, went to the tap, and ordered breakfast.

Among the waiters, hostlers, and post-boys, several labourers were assembled, and the burden of the conversation among them was the ruin of Ferrers, interspersed with conjectures as to the cause of his late strange visit to the castle, and observations on the extravagance of his behaviour. The subject was interesting to Andrew, and it became particularly so, in consequence of one of the waiters remarking, that the lady's child, as they called Monimia the orphan, was exceedingly like him. This observation was not, however, altogether attributable to the discernment of the waiter; for it seems that Flounce had, in the excursion with her lady, more than hinted to one of the chambermaids that she should not be surprised if the unknown baby was Mr Ferrers' daughter, for it was as like him as a kitten to a cat; and the chambermaid had frequently expressed her admiration of the resemblance, until a very general persuasion of the fact was entertained among all the servants of the house.

It is certainly much to be regretted, that people do not always act with the most perfect reason and good sense. But if they did so, there would be an end to every thing romantic in life; and therefore, perhaps, it is as well, after all, that there is a little folly in the world, a blessing which we sometimes think was bestowed to produce amusement. The reflections on the lady's child, and its resemblance to Ferrers, had the effect of inducing our hero to change his original intention of sifting the mystery at Castle Rooksborough, and to adopt another, calculated, as he thought, to bring the business to a more speedy conclusion; and assuredly it would have done so, had there not been other causes at work, the force and effect of which he could neither counter-act nor foresee.

The construction that he put upon the unfortunate manner in which the orphan was mentioned, namely, "the lady's child," led him to conclude that the real circumstances of its birth were not to be ascertained at that place, and he resolved to proceed directly to Elderbower, and have an explanation with Lady Sandyford herself.

This determination undoubtedly originated in motives of delicacy towards her ladyship; for the coarse remarks of the persons around him, with respect to the unfortunate Ferrers, had the effect to make him feel an extreme repugnance to enter into any conversation with them. He accordingly sent a messenger to the inn where he had left the carriage, to order it back to Chastington Hall, and when the London coach came up, he mounted the roof, and was conveyed to Elderbower.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AT FAULT.

Our hero reached the mansion of the dowager about an hour too late. Flounce, in obedience to the summons of her mistress, had quitted the house and gone to join her at Burisland Abbey;

whence, as we have related, they proceeded to Britonsbeild Castle. The servants were still in all the quandary and agitation which belonged, among them, to the unexpected and unexplained nature of that event. And Andrew, on enquiring at the gate for the countess, was informed that they knew nothing of her. This intelligence mortified him exceedingly; and he stood for some time in a state of stupefaction, occasioned by the repulsive tone in which it was given. He, however, soon rallied, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with John Luncheon, the footman, who had answered the gate bell; but his questions were so gruffly dismissed, that he was utterly at a loss how to proceed. At last he mustered self-possession enough to say, "I have come from my lord at Chastington Hall on most particular business with my leddy; but really what ye say is very confounding."

Upon hearing this, John gave him immediate admittance, and conducted him to Mrs Polisher.

"What's a' this amang you?" said he to her as soon as the footman had left the room. "Whar's Liddy Sanddyford, or that glaikit clatter-stoup, Flounce, her maiden? I would fain see the tane or the t'other."

"As for that," replied the decorous housekeeper, it is impossible to give you any satisfaction. The day before yesterday, the countess, as I must continue to call her till my lord instructs us to the contrary, left this in a post-chaise alone for Chastington Hall."

"That's no to be credited," cried Andrew, petrified at the news; "for I left it this morning, and she wasna there."

"Ah! well we know that," said Mrs Polisher; "she went but two stages, where, feigning to be indisposed, she stopped; and that evening the fellow Ferrers came to the inn where she then was."

Andrew drew in his breath, as if he had been pierced in the most sensitive part with some acute instrument, and then gave a long and deep puff of his breath, as if inwardly suffering the greatest corporeal anguish.

"Then," continued the housekeeper, "such a tragical scene took place, on her stepping into the carriage next morning after

bidding Mr Ferrers farewell, as never was witnessed. She fainted cold dead, and he ran off in a state of distraction, and some think he has made away with himself."

"All this," said our hero, "is most prodigious; but how came you to hear so many particulars?"

"Why, the fact cannot be questioned," exclaimed Mrs Polisher, a little sharply, at hearing any shade of doubt cast on her information. "Mr Servinal himself happened to come up to the inn door at the critical moment; and on seeing what took place, clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped back to Chastington Hall, to inform his master of this most scandalous discovery."

"But how did you hear it?—Who galloped here with this black story?—That's what I wish to know," said Andrew, in a peevish accent, distressed, and almost angry, he knew not why.

"Oh!" cried the housekeeper, "ill tidings are fast travellers. The chaise which her ladyship had ordered for Chastington before she was detected by Mr Servinal, as soon as her fellow was off, knowing it was all over with her character, she ordered round to Burisland Abbey, where she now is; and her slippery nymph, Flounce, has gone there with their bags and baggage. The post-boys who drove her told the whole story to the Avonsides, and the groom, who came to fetch Flounce, told our men; so there is no dubious possibility in the matter. The only thing that has consternated me in the business is, how our Lady Sandysford was so blind as not to see through the craftiness of the plot. But I take great blame to myself for concealing from her what every body in the house knew so well."

"And what was that?" enquired Andrew sorrowfully, quite overcome to find his good opinion of the countess so utterly wrecked.

"The child. The two good-for-nothings had not been here above three or four days till I found all out—where the brat was at nurse, and what beautiful clothes were so clandestinely sent to it," said Mrs Polisher; adding, in a tone of exultation at having so completely established what she deemed the truth, "And the creature Flounce, in her hurry, has left behind a portrait of Ferrers, which we all know, for we have seen him often. I have it, and will deliver it to my lord."

"Weel," ejaculated Andrew, with a sigh, "I have come a gowk's errand; and what am I to do next?"

At first an indescribable impulse of compassion, interest, and curiosity, prompted him to visit the countess at Burisland Abbey; for still, but it was only for a moment, he thought there might be some mistake in the story; but the tissue of circumstances was so strong, that he could not resist it; and he almost instantly resolved to return without delay to Chastington Hall, in order to ascertain the whole extent of the derogatory discovery which he was led to believe Servinal had made. On quitting Elderbower, however, he reflected that his services could no longer be of any use to the earl; and that, under the disagreeable circumstances which had come to light, it would be more discreet to return at once to town. Accordingly, he proceeded straight to the Nag's Head, where he engaged a place in the London coach, and wrote a brief but characteristic note to the earl, to the effect, that finding he had been all in the wrong, he could do no better than go home to Mr Vellum's work; his only consolation being, that he had been actuated by the best intentions.

When his lordship received this note, he read it over several times. He perceived that the information which Andrew had obtained was in unison with the discovery that Servinal had supposed he had made; and he had no doubt that it was perfectly true, and of the most afflicting kind. He affected, however, to speak of it to his mother lightly, and he praised the delicacy which dictated Andrew's letter and resolution to return directly to London; but she soon saw the profound effect which it had produced, and trembled for the consequences. For although he seemingly in nothing changed the daily routine of his recreations, she could discern that there was a self-exertion about him that was wholly at variance with the easy air he affected; and several times, when he seemed to be only reading at the table, she observed his eyes to wander vacantly round the room, and a tear drop upon the unnoticed page. More than once she began to speak with him on the subject of his concealed sorrow; but he either broke away from her abruptly, or exclaimed, with a sharp accent of vexation, "For Heaven's sake, spare me; I cannot endure to think of what has passed!"

One afternoon he seemed to have recovered his wonted serenity, but there was a tone of solemnity and sadness in his voice which filled the maternal breast of the dowager with boding and dread; and when, in the course of the evening, he happened incidentally to remark that he considered himself as the cause of his wife's ruin, she was struck with a feeling of horror and alarm; especially when, in attempting to palliate the reflection that dictated this sentiment, she hinted at the selfish disposition which the countess had always shown. "Do not blame her!" he exclaimed; "I was a fool not to have seen her true character from the beginning. I know not why I was so besotted as to believe, that under her artificial manners I saw the latent principles and essence of worth, and virtues, and sensibilities. Heavens, what a wretch I have been, if she did indeed possess any such qualities!" And, rising from his seat, he rushed wildly out of the room.

CHAPTER XL.

A SCIENTIFIC BARONET.

FOR some time after the Earl of Sandysford's departure from London, his friend Mordaunt remained anxious and indecisive respecting his own matrimonial concerns. The baronet still so strictly adhered to his determination, that Julia should marry Birchland, that it was found alike impracticable to work upon his feelings or his reason. He had given his word, and that pledge he was resolved to redeem.

Having exhausted every other resource of influence and persuasion, Mordaunt at last recollected what the earl said to him about our hero, whose address and sagacity had indeed left a favourable impression on his own mind. But there was something in the appearance of Andrew not altogether satisfactory to the pride of Mordaunt; and although he was inclined to consult him, he did not very clearly perceive in what manner his services could be rendered available.

However, soon after Andrew's return to London, having sent for him to breakfast, in order to enquire respecting the unfortunate situation of Lord and Lady Sandford, in the course of their conversation he several times became thoughtful, and alluded inadvertently to his own matrimonial prospects with doubt and anxiety. This, in one instance, was so particular, that our hero could not help remarking that he seemed troubled; and from one thing to another, Mordaunt at last opened his mind, describing the perplexity arising from the intractable character of Sir Thomas Beauchamp; at the same time expressing his regret, that the circumstances of Lord Sandford should have been such as to deprive him of his powerful assistance, to influence, if possible, the paternal feelings of the baronet.

Andrew sat for some time silent: at last he said, "I canna understan' what's the need o' a' this fasherie; for surely, if the lad and the lass are baith willing, they may soon come thegither."

"But," replied Mordaunt, "there are two things to be considered; first, the obligation which Sir Thomas conceives he is under to Birchland, and Miss Beauchamp's fortune. If she marry without her father's consent, I am persuaded he will cut her off with a shilling."

"It would be very dure o' the auld carle, were he to do the like o' that. But as for his promise, that's but w' id o' the mouth, and breath o' the nostril. The siller, however, is a deevil. I'm thinking that a fortune's no to be made, even by matrimony, without trouble. But no to mince the matter, what does the leddy hersel' say? Will she rin awa wi' you?"

Mordaunt laughed, and replied, the case was not so desperate.

"Toot, toot!" exclaimed Andrew; "ye ken vera weel that I didna mean that she was to gallop, stridling on a horse, wi' you in a pock before her, like a cadger wi' a smuggled keg o' brandy, or a butcher wi' a calf frae the fair. But to speak proper English, if we maun be on our perjinks, will you an' her baith rin awa thegither?"

"No," replied Mordaunt; "that is the difficulty. She will not consent to take any such disgraceful step."

"I'm thinking then, sir, that you should strain a point to get her; for, an that's her mind, she'll mak you a vera decent wife."

"Well," cried Mordaunt: "but how is the point to be strained?"

"I'll gang and speak to Sir Thomas," said Andrew. "I would hear what he has to say anent the matter. Let me ken the rights o' the case first, and then aiblins it may be in my capacity to help you."

"Depend upon't Mr Wylie," said Mordaunt, "that any interference of a stranger with Sir Thomas will only make matters worse. He's a thorough self-willed roundhead, and can only be dealt with by letting him have his own way."

"If he thinks he has it, won't that do as weel, sir? Mr Mordaunt, an ye put your concerns into my hands, ye maun just let me tak my ain gait, or I'll only ravel them by my meddling. Is Sir Thomas at hame, think ye, even noo?"

"Surely," exclaimed Mordaunt, in a tone of alarm, "you would not rush to him at once on the business?"

"Dinna fash your head about my ways and means, sir. Are nae ye wud for your wedding? what for would ye put obstacles and delays to your ain pleasure? I'll go to him outright; so just sit ye whar ye are till I come back. It's easier to excuse an ill deed, than to gie satisfactory reasons beforehand for the doing o' a good one. Therefore, Mr Mordaunt, sit still; an' if ye hae nae other playock, try if ye can persuade the cat to stand on her hind legs till I come back;" and in saying these words, our hero, with a smirking nod, whisked out of the room, leaving Mordaunt equally astonished at his humour and familiarity—distrusting his prudence, while he admired his promptitude.

Andrew went directly to Sir Thomas's; and, on the servant telling the baronet that a young man desired to speak with him on very particular business, he at once obtained an audience.

Sir Thomas was a tall, meagre, hard-favoured personage, verging towards his grana climacteric. He had little of the general appearance of a country gentleman, except in the freshness of his complexion; indeed, he had never cared much for field sports, nor for those kind of exercises so contributory to that hearty obstreperous corpulency, which is commonly deemed the most remarkable characteristic of the regular members of a county quorum. The baronet, in fact, was, in his own opinion,

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a man of science; but whether he excelled most in botany, mechanics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, or metaphysics, he had never ascertained, having no neighbours who understood even the meaning of the terms. But, undoubtedly, his proficiency must have been very extraordinary; for he had several times read all the books in his library which related to these sciences, amounting to nearly a hundred volumes, part of the collection of his maternal ancestor, Dr Gropingwit, who flourished in the Augustan reign of Queen Anne—as Sir Thomas often said of him, "A most learned man, having been one of the contemporaries of the great Sir Isaac Newton." To this collection, the baronet himself had made no additions; judiciously observing, when any new book relative to his private studies was accidentally mentioned, "Those that drink at the fountain head can never relish the waters of the polluted stream." And then he was wont to spout with a sounding voice, and a most tragical emphasis, both of look and gesture, the following verses from Chaucer:—

"Out of the old field, as man said,
Cometh the new corn fro year to year;
And out of old books, in good faith,
Cometh all new science that men lere."

His favourite passage, however, from the poets, was the opening to Young's Night Thoughts, which he repeated sometimes on a Sunday evening to his sister, Miss Lucretia, with so much slow solemnity, that sleep, in *propria persona*, generally paid her a visit before he got to the cadence of

"Lights on lids unsull'd with a tear."

At the close of which, he was wont to give an awful stroke on the table, as with the melancholious hand of fate; and Miss Lucretia as regularly then awoke, and said, "Brother, what's the clock?"

To this he as regularly replied with a smile of compassion,

"We take no note of time,
To give it then a tongue was wise in man."

But lifting his watch from the table at his elbow, he subjoined, "Ring for tea."

CHAPTER XLI.

A REMONSTRANCE.

ANDREW, when shown into the baronet's parlour, was rather startled at his appearance. Sir Thomas was reading in an arm-chair, with his feet on the fender; his clothes had been hastily huddled on—a condition that could not be altogether fairly attributed to having hurriedly dressed himself on account of the sharpness of the weather, for in all seasons he breakfasted in that state, and sat till about twelve o'clock. His stockings were loose, his knees unbuttoned, his neckcloth untied, and a slovenly grey duffle morning-coat carelessly invested the generality of his figure; while an old fur cap had succeeded his nightcap, and was destined, when the sun passed the meridian, to be supplanted in its turn by a wig.

"Well, friend," said he to Andrew, looking over his shoulder as our hero entered the room, "what are your commands?"

"I hae something that I would say to you," replied our hero; and he glanced at the venerable Miss Lucretia, who was sitting on the opposite side of the fire, busily employed in examining the weekly bills of the family. This look, if Sir Thomas had observed it, was meant to intimate a wish that the lady might be requested to favour them with her absence; but it was unnoticed, and Andrew continued, "I believe, sir, ye hae some acquaintance with Mr Mordaunt."

"I know the gentleman," replied the baronet, closing the book, and looking from under his spectacles as if he expected something interesting.

"He's a worthy gentleman," said Andrew, "and I am sure has a great respect for you, and would do ony thing to oblige you in his power."

"Hem!" ejaculated the baronet; and Miss Lucretia looked askance from her household bills towards the sly advocate. "But what's the drift of all this, young man?" enquired Sir Thomas, laying his book on the table, and taking off his spectacles.

"Nothing particular, Sir Thomas; but only as he's a good

frien' to me, I wish him weel, and would fain hope that things are no past remedy between him and you; for if that's the case, he's a gone dick—a dead man, as the saying is—and I doubt his death-ill will lie at your door, Sir Thomas."

The baronet looked in some degree of amazement; and Miss Lucretia, in her turn, glanced her inquisitive eyes first at our hero, and then on her brother.

Andrew saw their anxiety, and concluded that Sir Thomas meant to signify he thought him insane; for he observed him touching his forehead as he ocularly replied to Miss Lucretia's ocular interrogation. However, none disconcerted, he intrepidly continued, "But I'm sure, Sir Thomas, that it's no in your nature to harm the hair o' a dog, far less a gentleman that has a great regard for you and all your family; especially for your dochter, Miss Julia."

Miss Lucretia abandoned the investigation of her bills, and, pushing back her chair from the table, sat in upright astonishment. The baronet's under-lip fell down, and it would be difficult to say whether his eyes or mouth most strongly expressed the wondering of his spirit.

"Ye maunna be surprised, Sir Thomas, at what I'm saying, for it's a truth that Mr Mordaunt's in a state of great distress o' mind; and he's my friend, and I canna but try to serve him. But he says, Sir Thomas, you're such a man of your word, that I have no hope ye'll ever consent to give him your dochter. To that, however, sir, I answered, that surely ye were a rational man, and would hearken to rationality."

"What's your name?" enquired the baronet.

"My name's Andrew Wylie."

"And did Mr Mordaunt send you to speak on the subject to me?" resumed Sir Thomas.

"No, sir; he was confounded when I offered to come; but better to hae a finger off than aye aching. There was nae need that he should pine ony langer in pain, or you, Sir Thomas, live in anxiety, lest Miss Julia and him should rin awa' to Gretna Green; for the sicklike has been before. I'm sure this sensible leddy here kens that ye're running a dreadful risk of an elopement."

"I know nothing about it!" exclaimed Miss Lucretia with an indignant snort.

"Nae offence, madam, I hope," replied Andrew; "but I'm vera sure ye wouldna, ony mair than Sir Thomas himsel', like to see Miss Julia and Mr Mordaunt jehuing awa' in a chaise and four, and you and her father flying like twa desperate tigers after them, and no able to catch them."

"Why, friend," said the baronet, "this seems to be a very singular interference on your part—I don't understand it. How came Mr Mordaunt to consult you in an affair of this sort?"

"Ye wouldna, Sir Thomas, hae me to be my ain trumpeter?" replied our hero significantly.

"Then, to put an end to the business at once, my word is pledged to Mr Birchland."

"So Mr Mordaunt said. But ye maun just break your word, Sir Thomas; for a broken word's naething to a broken heart."

"I tell you, friend, that I will hear nothing further on this subject," replied the baronet.

"We'll hae twa words about that, Sir Thomas. I dinna think noo, baronet, that ye're just such a contumacious man as to be out o' the reach o' reason a' thegither, or I wouldna speak to you as I do, but help the lad and lass to be man and wife wi' a' expedient ability. Therefore, Sir Thomas, ye maun consider this matter with a cool and a sound mind, an ye hae ony pretensions to gumption at a'; for it's no past the bounds o' probability that some morning or lang ye may rant and ring for your dochter, whiskit awa' wi' the gaberlunzie, an ye continue in this contrarie disposition."

"Does Mordaunt mean to force me in this manner to give my consent?" said the baronet angrily.

"I'm sure," replied Andrew, "that I see nae forcing about it. But if ye will gar your dochter marry a man she doesna like, what comfort will ye get frae your dure word of honour, an ye hear, in less than a week after the wedding, a' the big wigs o' Doctors' Commons in a commotion?"

"The insinuation is insulting to my daughter's honour and principles!" exclaimed the baronet wrathfully.

"Vera true; but, Sir Thomas, ye ken marriages are made in

heaven, and it's plainly ordain't that Miss Julia and Mr Mor-daunt were trysted there by their mutual affection; and ye're fighting against the laws o' God when ye would try to set aside this natural attraction or affinity o' their spirits."

This touched the philosophy of the baronet, and opened to him a view of the subject that had never presented itself to him before, and he said, "Are you acquainted with the Newtonian philosophy?"

"Deed no, sir; I never fash my head wi' sic havers; for if a man's void o' common sense, I wonder what the wiser he'll be wi' philosophy. Can philosophy mend a club-foot, or put understanding in a toom head?—I doubt not. Truly, sir, it behoves you to think on what I hae said. Firstly, there may be an elopement; secondly, there may be worse; and thirdly, and assuredly, one way or another, there will be a broken heart, and the sin and blame o' a' will rest on your head. Talk o' words o' honour in a case like this! What's a word o' honour mair than ony ither word? It's just wind, Sir Thomas; and if ye'll tak my advice, the sooner ye break it ye'll be the easier. O Sir Thomas, ye look like a man that has something fatherly in you! But think o' auld doited Jeptha; what did he get by his rash vow? What consolation was it to him to see his lovely daughter lying in her winding sheet? Words o' honour, Sir Thomas?—Snuffs o' tobacco. But I'll sae nae mair at present, I see ye're prickit. O Sir Thomas! Sir Thomas! there's nae plaster for a wounded conscience, nor solder for a broken heart. It will be an awfu' thing when ye lie down to die, to think o' the shame or misery o' your only daughter; and that but for your own outstralpous obstinacy, ye might hae left her in felicity, or been laying your hand in prayer on the heads o' her bonny wee bairnies, a' greeting like bleating lambies at your bedside. Think o' that, Sir Thomas—think o' that; and if ye can then set yourself up against the laws o' God and nature wi' your daft words o' honour, I ken mysel' what's the name that will best fit you."

The ascendancy which our hero here assumed, and unconsciously felt, produced a profound effect on the baronet's mind and heart. He rose from his seat and walked across the room,

he halted and looked at Andrew; he then seemed to turn his thoughts inwardly, and again he paused. "Tell Mr Mordaunt," at last he said, "to come to me."

"That's a man," exclaimed Andrew, "noo ye're like yoursel', baronet; gladly will I tell Mr Mordaunt—so I wish you a vera good morning. Ye see, madam, what it is to hae a kind heart like Sir Thomas; it's the source o' a' delight and comfort in this world, begetting friends and quenching foes. Good morning to you again, Sir Thomas, and to you too, madam." And with this our hero quitted the room, and sped with what speed he could to inform Mordaunt of the happy result of his visit.

CHAPTER XLII.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

A FEW days after this interview, Andrew found a letter from his grandmother, which the master had written to her dictation. It related chiefly to some small matters that she was sending; but it contained a postscript from Tannyhill himself, which gave him more pleasure—he could not tell why—than even the affectionate spirit which breathed through the other simple sentences.

Mary Cunningham, who by this time had returned a full-blown young lady from Edinburgh to the Craiglands, in her walks round the village often called at the cottage, and jocundly chatted with old Martha about Wheelie, as she still continued to call him; and, at the time when the master was employed as amanuensis on this letter, she happened to come in. On being told for whom the letter was intended, she said, in her light and sprightly way, "Give my compliments, and say I am still waiting, and that he must do all he can to make his great fortune soon, or maybe I'll change my mind. Say, I'll no have him unless he come in his own coach and four."

The master was amused with the freedom of the playful rattle,

and literally wrote down the message as it had been delivered, adding from himself, by way of news, "William Cunningham, her brother, has gone into the army, much to the grief and displeasure of his aunt, who regarded him as the last of the male line of the family. As for the laird," continued the master, "he's just dauner about the doors in his old way, with his hands, as you first noticed, in his pouches; but he's a blameless body, and since his last increase, by the renewed tacks of the Braehead and the Loupingstane farms, he has been very kind to the poor, having divided five load of victual among all the needful in the parish."

While our hero was reading this epistle, Charles Pierston chanced to call, and said, on hearing the paragraph—for he had now begun to speak with an English accent—"Why, this is frank enough?"

"Hoot, Charlie," replied Andrew, "ye ken very weel I durst never even mysel' to Craiglands' only daughter; and ye may see through her blethers that she's making a fool o' me. Na, na, man—Mary Cunningham's setting her cap for a soldier-officer in gold lace. The very sight of sic a puddock as me in the capacity of a joe, would gar her kick me ouer on my back wi' her tae."

"Love is blind," replied Pierston; "and who knows but she may think you a likely, handsome fellow."

"If she did," cried Andrew, half seriously, "I would think her a terrible tawpy—and I'm sure I would as soon stick a rose in my bosom wi' a kailworm in't, as take the bonniest lass that ever was seen for my wife, that could be guilty o' ony sic haveril fancy."

From the time that our hero had been invited to Sandyford House, Charles had remarked a change in his deportment for which he could not account, Andrew never having mentioned either that circumstance or the masquerade. It had, however, the effect of producing a feeling of deference to his opinions, which he could not overcome. Wylie bore his raillery as gaily as ever; but there was a self-command, and a pith in some of his observations, which begot a respect that unconsciously made Charles feel himself the inferior, in spite of all his fashionable

dash and figure. This feeling, however, was unmingled with any of that invidious alloy, which the secret sense of inferiority commonly produces in mean and sordid minds; for Pierston was naturally frank-hearted, and there was something in the character of his friend which he liked, even while he could not restrain his disposition to laugh at him.

Why a youth in Andrew's station should have concealed from his companion the honour conferred on him by Lord Sandyford, we shall not attempt to explain. It may be that he thought Charles would suspect that he had been invited merely to make amusement—a humiliating consideration—or perhaps, judging from the ambitious love of show in his friend, he might apprehend that he would tease him to procure his admission to the same fashionable parties. In either case his silence was prudent; and, if the result of the latter consideration, it did credit to his sagacity. But this is an abstruse subject, and it is quite enough for us to state the fact; and also, that for some other good and substantial reason best known to himself, Andrew also as carefully concealed from Charles the amount of the extraordinary salary which the earl had so generously obtained for him. This circumstance occasioned Pierston, after the observation which we have quoted, to say, "By the way, Andrew, you have never told me the amount of 'the wage,' as you call it, which has enabled you to be so liberal to your grandmother—How much is it?"

"It's no under a hundred pounds," replied Andrew, apparently in a careless manner.

"I doubt," said Charles, "if it do not greatly exceed, the coach and four will be long of coming forward."

Andrew laughed, and said, "A plack wi' me Charlie, will aye gang as far as a pound wi' you—and I'm no fear't."

"True," cried Pierston; "for I have no Mary Cunningham to make me grip and gather."

"Now, Charlie," again exclaimed Andrew a little pettishly, "I dinna like that—an I were her equal ye might crack your jokes; but it's no a friend's turn to tell me in that gait, that poverty has debarred me from looking so high, even though I had been as braw and as crouse as yoursel'."

"Upon my conscience," replied Pierston, laughing, "I had no notion ye were so far gone. The fellow's honestly and simply in love."

Andrew reddened, and said sharply, "An I were sae, which I am not, ye might spare me your jeers, considering the impossibilities between us."

"Poo, poo!" cried Charles. "Faint heart never won fair lady—and wit, which you do not want, both in the stratagems of love and war, is worth a well-turned leg."

"What taught you to proverb sae glibly the auld tale o' Beauty and the Beast?" said Andrew, not displeased by the observation. "But, Charlie, to make an end o' a' debate on the subject, ye'll really oblige me by never speaking o' Mary Cunningham; for ye ken as well as I do, that no lassie would be so free wi' any young lad, if she had the least spunk of affection for him."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Pierston, "but get twenty thousand pounds as fast as ye can, and then away to the Craighlands; where, if ye speak auld crabbit Miss Mizy fair, I'll bet ten to one that there have been more hopeless speculations than your chance with Mary."

Andrew made no answer for some time to this, but sat pursing his mouth for about a minute, when he said, "She wouldna tak me wi' twenty thousand pounds, and that's mair than I can now hope for."

"Noo!" cried Charles, "why noo?—what has happened to make the likelihood less than it was?"

Andrew had alluded, in his own mind, to the termination of all further hope and expectancy with Lord Sandyford; but not choosing to explain himself, he said carelessly, "Atweel, I dinna ken what for I should think mysel' less likely noo than before, of getting twenty thousand pounds—and with this observation the interview ended."

Pierston, however, paid but little regard to the injunction with respect to Mary Cunningham; on the contrary, he took every opportunity of rallying Andrew more and more. And an event had already taken place, that was calculated to verify some of

the jocular predictions which he was in the practice of sporting on the subject.

CHAPTER XLIII.

INSIGHT.

On the Sunday following, after the conversation described in the preceding chapter, Charles Pierston called again on his friend, and, with a look pregnant with merry mischief, said, on entering, "Now, Andrew, ye must promise no to be angry with me, and I'll tell you news. Mary Cunningham's in London. Her brother has been wounded in one of the late battles, and she's come up, with Miss Mizy, to nurse him; for he's not in a condition to be removed to Scotland."

To have judged by the expression of our hero's countenance, it would not have been thought that he received any pleasure from these tidings; for he looked confused, and his colour went and came.

"Poor Willy Cunningham," said he, "was a clever warm-hearted callan. I'm sorry for his hurt, and I hope it's no deadly."

"But Mary is grown most beautiful," said Pierston waggishly.

"She dined with her aunt at my uncle's yesterday. Lord, Andrew, man, but ye'll get a prize an ye get her! She enquired very kindly for you; and I promised to let you know where they are in lodgings, for she expects you will call."

"I hae no occasion," said Andrew, with great simplicity.

"Why, you simpleton, have you no regard for your old school-fellow? I have come on purpose this morning to take you with me. Cunningham will be glad to see you; and Miss Mizy herself bade me say, that she has long forgiven the devilry o' the pyet."

"And I hae forgiven her, too," replied Andrew; "for it was out o' that I got the fifty psalms by heart."

"And out of that you and Mary Cunningham fell in love behind the headstone, ye know," cried Charles laughing.

"I'll tell you what it is, Charlie Pierston," said Andrew seriously, "I dinna like this daft nonsense of yours; and I'm sure Miss Cunningham would be vera angry if she heard you claver in that gait about her. So say no more about it, unless ye want to pick a quarrel wi' me, which I am sure and certain ye hae no intent to do."

"O, very well!" exclaimed Pierston; "if you don't like to hear o't, I'm sure it's no business of mine; but Miss Cunningham is a fine spirited girl, and, if you don't make haste, she'll be taken out of your hands."

"This is wicked havers, Charlie," cried Andrew in a short and shrill peevish accent, as if he had been pricked with needles. "I'm in no condition o' life to even mysel' to her, and that should cork your gab. But, howsomever, I'll be glad to go with you to see Willy; and I hope his sister may be out, for she's as thoughtless as yoursel', and ne'er devalds jeering me."

"Then come with me; and if she should be out," said Pierston dryly, "ye'll be able to have more talk with that amiable creature, aunty Mizy."

"Deil's in the fallow, I would as soon meet wi' a pow-head in my porridge at any time, as wi' the auld red-nebbit runt!" said Andrew, somewhat restored to good-humour, as he prepared himself to go out with Charles.

Pierston pretended to remark, that he seemed to take a little more pains than usual with his appearance, and said, "Dear me, Andrew, surely ye never intend to call on such ladies in that old-fashioned style? I thought by this time you would have changed your tailor, and had a more spruce coat for Sunday."

"What's the matter wi' this coat, Charlie?" said our hero pawkily, thinking of the parties where it had been often worn with far more consideration than many of the most fashionable there. "There's no ae steek broken. Na, na; I allow mysel' but ae new coat in the year, and this maun serve for six months yet."

Pierston, who was well aware of the original penury of Andrew's circumstances, and respected the firmness of his cha-

acter, did not push his raillery further on his appearance and dress. Had he, however, been acquainted with the actual amount of his income, he would have despised him as one of the most sordid of mortals.

In their way to Cunningham's lodgings, he informed him that his uncle intended to place him in business on his own account, and hoped that in time he might have it in his power to be of some use to Andrew. There was both pride and kindness in this; but our hero felt only the warmth of the latter sentiment.

In this sort of conversation they reached Sackville Street, where they found the Cunninghams in the second floor of the same house where Mordaunt lodged. Pierston was a little mortified to find them so far aloft, and blamed "the haining heart" of Miss Mizy; alleging that it was unworthy of people of their fortune to be so meanly accommodated. Andrew, without dissenting from this opinion, was pleased with the circumstance; because, by his acquaintance with Mordaunt, it gave him an opportunity of being indirectly seen, as it were, by Mary Cunningham, on a vantage ground that he could not otherwise have so easily reached. And with a view to this, while he sent Charles up stairs before him, he stepped into the drawing-room, where Mordaunt was at the time sitting, engaged on some papers connected with the arrangements for his marriage, which was to take place in the course of the following week.

Mordaunt, whose admiration of our hero's address and discernment was raised to the utmost by the happy effects of his remonstrance with Sir Thomas, received him with the greatest pleasure, saying, "I consider myself, Wylie, so much indebted to you, that I beg you will count me among your friends; and when at any time you can point out in what way it is in my power to serve you, I trust and expect you will claim the fulfilment of this promise."

At such a time, and when Andrew was on the point of visiting Mary Cunningham, this assurance came to him like an inspiring air; and he said, "Whenever the time arrived that he might go into business on his own account, he would take the freedom of then applying to him."

Mordaunt on this reiterated his promise, and declared that he should not only have him for a client, but that he would never lose a proper occasion to speak of his merits and abilities.

Andrew, with this assurance of prosperity in hereafter, left Mordaunt, and with a light foot mounted the stairs to the sitting-room above; where, knocking with his knuckle, he was immediately admitted by Mary Cunningham herself. Charles Pierston was in the room with her; and it was evident, from the excessive interjections of joy with which she received him, that they had been contriving some nirthful salutation. But although, in the first moment of meeting, this was plainly the case, there was in her manner, almost immediately after, a sentiment of unaffected pleasure towards him, of a more moderate, but deeper kind; and she treated him with something very like that cheerful and pure affection which subsists between a brother and a sister. She expressed her satisfaction that he had been so fortunate to obtain the good-will of his master, and spoke to him of the love and interest which his grandmother showed to him, and of her honest pride at every little token of his affection. But there was something like a feeling of condescension in this kindness, that he liked less than her banter. And though more put out of countenance, he was yet much better pleased, when she reminded him of several little village-anecdotes, and described his ludicrous appearance behind the tombstone concerning his psalms.

But this momentary embarrassment was relieved by the entrance of Miss Mizy, who came out of Cunningham's bedroom with an air of prodigious consequentiality, addressing herself with a simper to Pierston, who could with difficulty keep his gravity, while she glanced askance at our hero, as on a creature of an inferior order of beings. Many things had occurred to convert Andrew's dislike of Miss Mizy's superciliousness into contempt; and with a degree of nonchalance that neither Mary nor Pierston could withstand, he said, "Eh dear! Miss Mizy, but ye're looking auld like—I couldna hae thought that in sae short a time there would hae been sic a change."

The elderly gentlewoman did not well know what reply to

make to this most irreverent salutation; but at last she said, tartly, "It's no the case wi' thee, Wheelie, for thou's just the same wee blackent-like taid as when you left the Stoneyholm."

"Ay, Miss Mizy," said Andrew, "neither you nor me can help our looks. We're baith made by the hand of God, and the art o' man canna mend us."

"Thou was aye a sorrowfu' laddie," cried Miss Mizy, both nettled and diverted by this address; for, with all her acrid humour, she was not insensible to the influence of Andrew's drollery. "And they would need lang spoons that sup wi' the de'il. Howsomever, I'm glad to see thee looking sae weel, and to hear o' thy weel-doing." And she then proposed that Andrew should adjourn to see his old schoolfellow.

Time, which had not improved the charms of Miss Mizy, had wrought a great change on Cunningham. He was grown into a fine manly figure, and his profession had brought out and confirmed the bold and decisive features of his character. His wound, however, confined him to his couch, and he could only welcome Andrew with a generous shake of the hand—expressing his admiration at the unchanged simplicity of his appearance.

Mary, who had accompanied our hero into her brother's apartment, still harping on the old theme, reminded them of the pyet-plot, and joked with Andrew on the loss of his first love, Maggy.

Experience of the world, the freedom, it may be the licentiousness of a military life, had given Cunningham a knowledge of womankind above his years, and he looked sharply for a moment at his sister, in such a manner as brought a blush into her cheek that spread over her neck and bosom, and, however, further passed—for the necessity that Cunningham was under, on account of his wounds, of remaining undisturbed, obliged them to leave the room, and return to that in which Miss Mizy and Pierston were sitting. Andrew did not resume his seat, but nodding a good morning, moved to go away. In turning round, his eye caught several cards on the mantelpiece; and, among others, he observed an invitation, sticking ostentatiously behind the glass, from his friend the Duchess of Dash-

ingwell; but he said nothing. The moment, however, that he got into the street, he contrived to shake of Pierston, and went immediately to pay his respects to her grace.

CHAPTER XLIV.

STRATAGEMS.

ANDREW, from their first meeting, had continued a great favourite with the duchess; but having, from motives of delicacy towards Lord and Lady Sandford, abstained from the parties of their friends, her grace began to wonder what had become of him, and his reception, in consequence, was unusually free and cordial. After the buoyancy and gladdenings of her joyous welcome had subsided, she requested that he would make a point of coming to her ball—the same to which Miss Cunningham and her aunt were invited.

"I'll do that, my leddy duchess, with the greatest pleasure," was his answer; "for there's a young lady frae the same countryside wi' me, that I understand is likely to be there."

"And pray who is that?" cried her grace, looking a little slyly, and not a little surprised at the reason.

"Miss Cunningham," was the reply; and there was a degree of diffidence in the tone in which it was said, that still more excited the curiosity of the duchess, who immediately exclaimed—

"On my conscience, Wylie, you are a man of infinite taste, as well as jest. She is very beautiful, and possesses an air of life and fashion uncommon for a country girl."

"She's weel enough an' she be gude," said Andrew, half blushing, and with an affected simplicity, seemingly intended to parry the mirthful malice which he saw her grace was mustering for an assault, but in reality to inveigle her into his interests; for he knew that the open and blithe heartiness of her

disposition would, if once engaged on his side, make little scruple in setting him off to the best advantage.

"Why, Wylie," she exclaimed, "how long have you known Miss Cunningham?"

"Oh, ever since we were bairns!"

"Bairns!" cried the duchess.

"It's a perfect truth," replied Andrew; "her father was the laird, and I'm but a cottar's son—so I wouldna hae you fancy, because I should be glad to meet Miss Cunningham at your ball, that I hae any other motive than the pleasure of seeing an old acquaintance."

"If any other being than yourself," cried the duchess, "had said so, I might perhaps have half believed him; but I know you too well, Wylie—my cousin Mordaunt has told me what you have done for him, and that Sandysford writes you have more skill in the common law of human nature, than all the twelve judges have of the laws of the land; so no going about the bush with me—I see you are in love with Miss Cunningham—that's the perfect truth."

"Weel, my leddy duchess, an' I should be sae, I canna help it—the cat may look at the king," replied our hero. "But it's ae thing, your grace, for a man to admire, and another thing for a woman to admire; and it's no reasonable to expect that ever Miss Cunningham would have any thing more than the kindly condescension of an old friend towards me."

"Now Wylie," said the duchess in a firmer tone, and with a steady countenance, while her eye playfully sparkled, "I have a great mind to be angry. How dare you, in this cunning manner, try to make me your confidant? for you know very well, that a woman once in the secret of a lover, must needs take a part. I see through your drift, friend; you think if you could get the backing of a duchess it might further your suit."

"Your grace," cried Andrew, interrupting her, "is cutting far before the point. I never had any sic thought, my leddy duchess; and I think, considering who I am, and what Miss Cunningham is, we have sported in this matter a wee thought ower muckle."

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conjecture, and that Andrew was actuated by a wish to lessen, in the opinion of his mistress, the disparity which he felt so deeply; but that he should have presumed to suppose a lady of the duchess's rank would ever be brought to take any interest, or to feel any sympathy in his case, at first sight appears highly ridiculous. He had, however, seen enough of the world to know, that below a certain degree the great make no distinctions of rank; and that the laird of Craiglands' daughter and the cottar's son, considered from such an elevated pinnacle of nobility as that of her grace, would seem to stand on no very striking inequality either of rank or condition. Besides, he was fully aware that the familiarity with which he had been always treated by the duchess, had entirely stifled any sentiment which the humbleness of his birth might perhaps, in an earlier stage of their intercourse, have occasioned to his disadvantage. But whether we are attributing to him more machiavelism than he really practised, or ascribing to the duchess more discernment than she possessed, it is certain that the result was in consonance with what we have stated of both; for her grace found herself irresistibly engaged in his behalf; and from this conversation, after leaving the duchess, he seemed to be animated with a new spirit, the first manifestation of which was in ordering a new suit of clothes, with strict injunctions to make them of the very finest cloth, and in the neatest manner possible, and a little more in the fashion than the cut of those he always wore, which were the exact counterpart of the suit he had originally brought from Stoneyholm.

In this new suit, on the night appointed, he made his appearance at the ball. The duchess, with that sharp eye which the ladies always have to the appearance of the gentlemen, saw, at the first glance, the change in his garb; and said, that she suspected Miss Cunningham's interest and influence had been already beneficial to his tailor. At that moment Mary was announced, and entered the room, leaning on the arm of her aunt. In approaching towards the duchess, she was so startled at seeing Andrew at her grace's side, and on terms of such familiarity, that she became confused, and blushed, and seemed

utterly at a loss to express the few simple common-places requisite for the occasion.

The keen-sighted duchess saw her confusion, and gave Andrew a pinch between the shoulders; while, with her wonted urbanity, she said, "My dear Miss Cunningham, I am so rejoiced you are come; for my friend, Mr Wylie here, has been beseeching me to get him a partner for the next dance, so earnestly, that I was driven to my wit's end. He is such a creature, that unless he obtains one of the very finest women wherever he goes, he will not dance at all."

Miss Mizy, who during this speech had recognized Andrew, stooped forward and pried, as it were, into his face, with such curious amazement, that he could with difficulty keep his gravity, while he said, "Dear me, Miss Mizy, is that you? I thought your dancing days were past."

"I declare," cried Miss Mizy, turning round to her niece, and stretching herself up into the most lofty posture of consequentiality, "it's that whittret Wylie!"

Mary by this time had a little recovered the emotion of her first surprise; and while she clung, as it were alarmed, to her aunt, in passing from the duchess she said, "Wheelie, I'll be as plain as I'm pleasant—mind, you're no to expect me to dance with you."

"It's vera weel o' you, Miss Mary," replied Andrew pawkily, "to tak the first word o' flyting; but ye should first ken whether ye're come up to my mark or no."

Mary bit her lips and blushed. There was a confidence in this retort that made her feel the inferiority of her feminine bravery; and, for the first time, she was affected with an indescribable embarrassment towards Andrew. He, however, continued at her side; and, as he was well acquainted with many of the most distinguished guests, Miss Mizy was delighted they had fallen in with him; for, unaccustomed to large and general companies, she was peculiarly susceptible to that disagreeable feeling of insignificance which the unknown multitudes of London uniformly awaken in strangers from the country.

When Andrew had paraded the rooms with them for some time, and enjoyed his ovation, he enquired of Mary if she was really

disposed to dance, saying, "I ken vera weel that ye dinna like to hae sic a wee smytch o' a partner as me; but, for auld lang syne, I'll get you a partner."

By this time the lady's pride was a little cowed, and she hesitated in her answer.

"Oh!" said Andrew, "ye needna be on any ceremony wi' me: for, in truth, I never dance; so I'll let you aff for the partnership of her grace's making."

There was something in the manner in which this was said, and in the look which accompanied the words, that brought the crimson into Miss Cunningham's face.

"What are ye saying?" exclaimed Miss Mizy, observing the confusion of her niece.

"Oh, naething!" replied Andrew, "but that I'll get Miss Mary another partner, which will leave me free to dance the Scotch measure or the Blackamoor's jig wi' you, Miss Mizy. Eh! what a wonder it will be to a' the company to see you and me louping and flinging like the witches in Alloway Kirk!" And after these words he scudded from them through the crowd, towards a young nobleman with whom he was acquainted, equally remarkable for the beauty of his person, his self-conceit, and shallow understanding, and enquired if he would dance with Miss Cunningham. Mary's appearance had by this time attracted the attention of all the men; and Lord Dimpleton, delighted with the proposal, immediately went with Andrew, and was introduced to the ladies.

In choosing such a partner, it is not to be doubted that Andrew had consideration for his lordship's endowments; for in the selection, he paid a compliment to the discernment of his mistress, with whom, according to the estimate he had formed of her judgment and sense, he judged that neither the rank nor the personal appearance of the young baron would have any prejudicial influence on his own pretensions—pretensions for the first time felt on that evening.

Nothing else particularly occurred during the remainder of the night. The two ladies, on account of Cunningham's illness, retired early, and next day, when Andrew called, Mary was cool and distant towards him; while her aunt, on the contrary, received him with marked attention, expressing her wonder and

surprise to have found him such a favourite among so many of the nobility. But all the pleasure he derived from the altered manners of Miss Mizy, was far more than overbalanced by the cold decorum of Mary; for he perceived that it was the result of some secret reflection, and that the change was not favourable to his wishes. In one respect, however, it was not discouraging; for it seemed to imply that she no longer considered the difference in their condition an insurmountable obstacle to the gratification of those wishes which he had now seriously begun to entertain.

During the remainder of the time that the Cunninghams stayed in London, Andrew frequently called; but no alteration took place in the studied reserve of Mary; nor did he appear in any instance to presume one step further than he had been accustomed to take. Towards Miss Mizy, however, his behaviour had evidently entirely altered. He took every opportunity of soothing her humour, and flattering her in all the tenderest and most vulnerable parts of her character, till she was thoroughly persuaded that he was one of the wisest and most discerning of mankind—an opinion which she peremptorily asserted whenever Mary affected in his absence to ridicule his person or manners; adding to the assertion an emphatic prediction, that she was sure he would be ordained Lord Mayor of London; for he was in a far more likely road to the post than Whittington when greeting wi' his cat in his arms.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FOREST.

FOR some time after the Cunninghams left London, nothing particular occurred to our hero. He attended his duty as usual at chambers, and frequently the parties of his fashionable friends. The marriage of Mordaunt took place at the time appointed; and, in addition to a renewal of his promise to give Andrew his business when he commenced on his own account, Sir Thomas

Beauchamp himself assured him that he might likewise count him among his friends, and claim his best offices as soon as they could be of any use. But no incident gave him more pleasure than a letter from Lord Sandfyord, requesting him to come to Chastington Hall for a few days—an invitation which Mr Vellum cheerfully allowed him to accept.

The object which the earl had in view in wishing to see him, was with reference to a settlement which he intended to make on the countess, but which, for some reason that he never explained, he wished to be kept secret even from Vellum.

Andrew was never fond of travelling post; nor was he more satisfied with the perilous velocity of stage-coaches. In his jaunt to Chastington Hall, he therefore resolved to take his own way. Accordingly, in the afternoon of the first day's journey, as he intended to sleep that night at the seat of Mordaunt, to whose happiness he had so essentially contributed, he left the coach in which he came from London, and walked forward alone; his portmanteau being, with many injunctions, entrusted to the care of the guard, to be left at the Sandfyord Arms—the public-house at the park gate of Chastington Hall.

His road lay through an open forest, along the bottom of a range of hills beautifully covered with verdure; but except where here and there sprinkled with sheep, they were lonely and silent. The fantastic forms of some of the old trees were calculated to awaken romantic fancies; while the pastoral tranquillity of the hills had a sympathetic influence on the mind, and disposed the passing traveller to something like a sense of awe.

As Andrew was onward plodding his solitary way, he happened, in one of the thickest parts of the wood, to observe a troop of gipsies encamped at the foot of a spacious oak, to a branch of which they had fastened a rope that suspended their kettle. An old and withered hag, in a red cloak, the ancestress, as she seemed, of the whole gang, was seated near the kettle, endeavouring with her mouth to blow into flame a few sticks and splinters which she had placed under it; at her side stood a knavish black-eyed urchin peeling onions; while at some distance a younger female, the mother of the boy, was picking the feathers from a goose that had been missed that morning from

the flock of Justice Stocks on Ganderfield Common. A child about twelve months old was standing near the grandmother, in a wattled frame, somewhat like a fowl-basket in shape, but without top or bottom; some ten or a dozen yards further off lay a stout ill-favoured young man, in ragged regimentals, asleep on the ground, his head resting on the root of a tree; while an old churl was engaged in unloading a rude cart, from which an ass had been unyoked, that a sturdy lad was dragging by a hair-tether towards a richer rug of grass and herbage than covered the spot where they had fixed their temporary domicile.

Andrew, who had no great affection for vagrants of any kind, was not at all comfortable when he discovered these, and tried to walk hastily and softly past them; but the boy who was peeling the onions happened to discover him, and was at his side in a moment, most pathetically imploring charity. Our hero affected not to notice him, but hastened on, which quickened the boy's importunity to such a degree that it could be no longer resisted. It happened, however, that Andrew had no smaller change than silver; and in his trepidation, mistaking half-a-crown for a penny-piece, astonished the beggar by his liberality. The gipsy, in a transport of joy, returned shouting to headquarters, and to the horror of Andrew, who gave a hurried backward glance, the whole gang were assembled round the boy, and looking towards him. "They will think me," said he to himself, "made of money, and they'll pursue and murder me." The thought lent wings to his heels; and the moment that a turn of the wood concealed him from the view of the gipsies, he ran at full speed till he was out of breath.

By the time he had recovered the immediate effects of his race, the sun had declined to the horizon, and the skies, with that uncertainty of weather which prevails in the fall of the year, were clouded and overcast. No habitation was in sight; and as the road had proved more long and lonely, to say nothing of the gipsies, than was expected, he began to fear he was destined to be overtaken by the night. This was not at all a comfortable apprehension, nor was it cheered by a flash of lightning, slowly followed by deep and muttering thunder, that grumbled heavily behind the hills.

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"What shall I do if the rain comes on before I get to biggit land?" said our disconsolate adventurer, eyeing the threatening heavens. The lightning flashed in his face, and the thunder instantly rattled such a peel, that he ran cowering along as if the vault and rafters of the skies were tumbling about his ears.

This sudden clap was immediately succeeded by large drops of rain.

On the one side Andrew beheld only the darkening hills, bare and dreary; and on the other, the forest, full of fantastic shapes and shadows.

The lightning grew more frequent, and the thunder rolled louder and louder. The whole welkin was filled with blackness, and the gloom of night invested every object long before the natural time. Still, however, the rain held off, except an occasional scattering of broad and heavy drops, which indicated with what a deluge the clouds were loaded.

There was no time for reflection, but only for speed; and as Andrew hastened on, he discovered, by the frequent gleams of the lightning, that the forest was left behind, that the hills receded, and that his road lay across an extensive common. This circumstance did not in itself disturb him; but soon after, he found that he had strayed from the path, and was walking on the grass. He tried to regain the road; but in doubt whether it lay on the right or the left, in the search he went still more and more astray; and the rain beginning to descend in torrents, his heart sank within him. In this juncture he discovered, by a gleam of lightning, a large tree at some distance; and impelled by the immediate instinct which the rain awakened, he forgot the danger of such a shelter in such a storm, and ran towards it. Scarcely, however, had he taken twenty steps, when, in the midst of a fearful flash, the tree was riven into splinters by a thunder-bolt.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HOSPITALITY.

ANDREW, for some time after the tree had been shivered into splinters, stood like a statue. Drenched to the skin, and astray, he had no alternative, when he recovered from his consternation, but to walk straight forward. He had not, however, advanced many paces till he found his perplexity increased, and his feet bewildered among rushes and sedges, and environed with the perils of a morass. Perhaps his fears augmented the danger, and it was only the effects of the heavy and sudden rain that he mistook for a marsh; but the water deepened when he attempted to advance, and he was glad to retrace his steps.

Completely wet, and almost overwhelmed by despair, he quitted the borders of the morass, and with a sort of instinctive, or rather irrational, precipitancy, he ran from it, till he was again stopped by the noise of a river before him, so loud that he could not but fear it was deep, strong, and rapid, swollen, as it was, into fury by the torrents from the hills.

This was even, he thought, more appalling than the oak shivered by the lightning; and under an immediate pressure of despair in the moment, he sat down upon a stone, which he afterwards described as the head and corner-stone of his sufferings in that night.

He had not been long seated, when he discovered a light at some distance. It was low, dim, and red; but it was to him like the hospitable eye of a friend, and he rose and walked cautiously towards it. In a short time he found himself again in the forest, and still the light was beaming and alluring him forward; and the rain having passed off, he felt, although dripping with wet, more and more confidence as he advanced.

As he walked in a straight line, his path was rugged and uneven, and in many places interrupted with brambles, through which, however, he resolutely forced his way, afraid, if he deviated to the one side or the other, he might lose sight of the light. By this constancy of perseverance, in the course of a short

time he reached near enough to see that it was a fire, around which several persons, men, women, and children, were seated; and pressing still on, he at length discovered a stew-kettle hanging from a bough, and recognized his old acquaintances the gipsies.

This recognition did not at first produce any very agreeable emotions; but the horrors of the thunder-storm had somewhat changed his mood. He was cold, and weary, and wet. He was also not altogether free from the pains of hunger. The fire burned brightly; the flames flickeringly climbed the sides of the pot, as if they would have gladly tasted its savoury contents, that fumed in a streamy vapour to the boughs; while the gipsies around were drying their rags at the fire, and smiling cheerfully to one another, their sparkling eyes and brightening faces giving an assurance of innocent thoughts and free dispositions.

The boy, who had won the half-crown, was the first who discovered Andrew; and coming hastily forward, immediately recognised him. Danger had taught our hero address, and before the boy had time to say any thing, he stepped briskly to the group, and said, "Honest folk, can ye assist a poor wayfaring man that has missed the road, drookit to the skin, and little able to gang farther?"

The gipsies immediately opened their circle, and made room for him by the fire; and after some unknown jabber among themselves, the stripling, whom we have mentioned as leading the ass, rose and went to the cart, from which he returned with a bottle, that he offered to Andrew, telling him it was brandy, and to take a suck. The offer did not require the aid of much persuasion; and in drawing his breath, after having swallowed a modicum, our hero thought the gipsies very civilized kind of creatures.

Somewhat invigorated by the brandy, and his clothes beginning to dry, he entered into conversation with them, enquiring how far he was from any place where he could obtain shelter. They told him that there was a village, about two miles off, within the forest; and the young fellow in the old regimentals, offered to conduct him thither after supper. In the mean time,

the grandmother, who had frequently tasted the soup with a wooden ladle, at length declared it ready; and the kettle was untied from the rope, and placed on the ground—horn spoons were then distributed, and our hero invited to partake. The soup was eaten immediately from the seething-kettle, each of the company blowing to cool it as he carried it to his mouth. In this manner the broth was consumed; and slices of bread being distributed, the goose was torn in pieces, and the parts seized at random. The old man, however, presented Andrew with a leg; and he, in his turn, won the hearts of the women, by giving the youngest child a bone to suck from his own mouth. It was this happy facility of adapting himself to the manners of those among whom he happened to be placed, that so wonderfully shaped his fortune. The gipsies, whom he had so greatly dreaded, not only treated him with kindness, but the fellow whose appearance seemed almost too uncouth for humanity, was delighted in being afforded an opportunity of repaying the confidence which he seemed to have reposed in them.

When supper was over, the regimented gipsy accordingly renewed his offer to conduct our hero to the village; and Andrew, in a glow of thankfulness, augmented by the generous effect of finding so much of the kindness of human nature among a troop of vagrants, whom he considered as the most depraved of the species, distributed among them a handful of uncounted silver, the first unreckoned money he had ever expended.

After the storm, the moon looked from her window in the cloud, to tell the travellers who had gone into shelter that they might resume their journey, and our hero, with the gipsy, went towards the village.

"You will find but sorry quarters there," said the guide. "The only person who can give you warm ones is the parson, and he won't. The never a one does he fodder; but for that his goslings are thin on the common, and his capons are at feast before they are fattened. Howsomever, we'll pull his latch, and try his heart. But that you must do; for were I seen within his paling, the hemp is not to spin that would purse my throttle."

As soon as the gipsy showed the parson's gate, Andrew said to him, "Maybe, young man, I may hae it in my power to do as

good a turn as this for you some time, if ye'll let me know when."

And he gave him his card, and wished him good-night.

It was now far in the evening; but the candles were still burning bright in the parlour of Dr Saffron, when our hero rang the bell at the gate. A watch-dog, with an audible bay, answered the summons; and soon after, a servant in homely livery opened the door, and enquired who was there.

"Tell your master, my lad," was the reply, "that a young man, in great need of a night's lodging, would be obliged to him for a bed."

"Tell the fellow to go about his business!" exclaimed a gruff corpulent voice from within, whose accents were scarcely more civil than those of the mastiff.

"I have no other business at this time, reverend sir, and ye had as wee' let me in; for my claes are damp, and my legs are weary, and it will no be telling you if ony thing ails me at your door," replied our hero.

"Who are you?—What are you?" cried the doctor, showing forth his plump red visage, crowned with a white nightcap, from behind the door, and holding a candle in his hand.

"I am a bewildered Christian," said Andrew slyly, "that was overtaken by the storm, and glad to ask help of a gang of houseless gipsy vagrants, that treated me with great discretion; your reverence will no surely be more uncircumcised than gipsies?"

"But what are you?" cried the doctor more earnestly, coming out into full view.

"I'm by profession in the law," replied Andrew, "and was only passing through this part of the country."

"Have you no horse, no carriage?" exclaimed the parson.

"I have nothing of the sort," was the reply. "In truth, sir, ye never had a better opportunity to do a ceevil thing in your life, than to take me in who am a stranger in this land."

"It is a bold request to come to any gentleman's door, and demand quarters in this manner," replied the doctor; and he was on the point of ordering the footman to come in and shut the door, when our hero, apprehensive of prolonging the conversation in this way a little too much, said, "It's vera true,

doctor, what you say; but it was all owing to a freak of mine. I am going into the west, on a visit to the Earl of Sandyford, and was to have taken my bed to-night with Mr Mordaunt of Beech-grove, in this neighbourhood. Beguiled by the fine afternoon, I was enticed to walk from the last stage. The storm overtook me, and here I am at your merciful hospitality."

There was something in this that the doctor liked better than the previous conversation, and he requested him to come in. The appearance of our hero, at all times rather odd than prepossessing, somewhat startled the rector, who soon, however, discovered, notwithstanding his homely exterior, that he was accustomed to good society. The conversation having led to a few further explanations, the parlour-bell was rung, and the servant ordered to get a bed prepared for the stranger.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EXPLANATIONS.

THE Reverend Doctor Saffron, into whose hospitable mansion our hero had been received, questioned him in rather a particular manner as to the situation of Lord and Lady Sandyford. Wylie was struck with this circumstance, and it excited his curiosity to ascertain the cause.

"It's no easy to say what's their situation," was his wary reply; "but I'm thinking they are some friends of yours."

"No," said the doctor, "but I have heard that an unfortunate nephew of mine is deeply implicated in what has happened between them."

"Ay!" exclaimed Andrew, "so ye're uncle to that slippery blade, Ferrers?"

"Yes, I have the sorrow and misfortune. His mother was my only sister, and he is properly my heir; but for some time his conduct has been so extravagant, and his mind so unsettled, that I fear he will constrain me to cancel the obligations of nature and affection."

"Where is he now?" said our hero.

"That I cannot answer," replied the doctor: "I would give much to know; for this very afternoon I received a letter from one of his friends, the contents of which have greatly distressed me. He has not been seen in London for some time, and no one of his acquaintance there can tell what has become of him."

"That's very distressing, sir; very distressing, indeed!" observed Andrew thoughtfully; and he then added, "The last account we had o' him was he's being in the neighbourhood of Elderbower with the countess."

"Possibly he may still be with her—where is she?" enquired the doctor.

"No," replied Andrew, "her leddyship is no just left so far to hersel'. Ever since the discovery, she has been living a very penitent life in one of her father's old castles, where ravens and howlets are the only singing-birds she can bide to hearken to. Maybe Mr Ferrers has fled the country."

"According to his friend's account, that is not likely to be the case, for his means were entirely drained; he had lost every thing," said the doctor. "Indeed, the occasion of the enquiry respecting him is of such a nature, that nothing but the most extreme ruin could have given rise to it."

"It's a sore thing to have ill-doing friends. But I trust and hope that he's no under hidings for any thing worse than his cuckooing."

The doctor looked severely at the levity of this expression; but he added, with emphasis, "There are sins which deeply injure society, more venial than crimes of far less turpitude. Nothing but actual insanity can palliate Ferrers' offence."

"I'm concerned to hear't—what is't?" said Andrew, drawing his chair a little closer to the doctor, and looking earnest and grieved.

"He abandoned an Italian girl who lived with him, and left her on the eve of becoming a mother, almost literally without a shilling. Overwhelmed with the sense of her situation, and poverty, she rashly followed him to Castle Rooksborough, where she died suddenly in giving birth to her child."

"And what has become of the baby?" said Andrew, compassionately.

"Fortunately, as I have learned, on sending over this afternoon to my friend, the rector of Castle Rooksborough, a lady of rank happened to be passing through the village when the melancholy occurrence took place, and humanely left money, not only to defray the expenses of the mother's funeral, but the nursing of the child."

"How long ago?" said Andrew eagerly.

The doctor was startled by the quickness of the question, and, instead of giving him a direct answer, said, "You seem surprised."

"What did they ca' the leddy?" exclaimed our hero, still more impatiently.

"She wished her name concealed; but some suspicion is entertained that it was no other than Lady Sandyford."

At these words Andrew leaped from his seat, and ran dancing round the room, cracking his fingers, and whistling triumphantly. The reverend doctor threw himself back in his chair, and looked at him with amazement. At last Andrew halted, and going close up to him, said, "Oh, but ye hae told me blithe news! I could wager a plack to a bawbec, that I have been aye of the stupidest creatures that ever the Lord took the trouble to put the breath of life in."

Still the doctor could only look his astonishment. "Ay," continued Andrew, "ye may weel glower with the een of wonder; for really this is a joy unspeakable, and passing all understanding. I'll set off for Chastington Hall this blessed night—no; I'll gang first to my leddy, to make all sure. Weel, who could have thought that Providence was, in a storm, to make me an instrument in this discovery."

"Discovery!" echoed the doctor mechanically.

"It's better than the longitude—it's the philosopher's stone! Oh, doctor, doctor! the genie of Aladdin's lamp could not play pew to you! What's apple-rubies and plum-pearls to charity and heavenly truth? But I maun compose myself, for I see ye're terrified, and think I'm going off at the nail."

"I am, indeed, exceedingly surprised at the vehemence of

your conduct," said the doctor emphatically. "This news, which was to me so fraught with affliction, seems to you pregnant with great pleasure."

"It's an ill wind that blows naeboddy good!" cried Andrew, still unable to bridle his joy. "But what's pleasure to me bodes no ill to you. Depend upon't, doctor, there's as little truth in that foul tale of your nephew and Leddy Sanddyford, as in a newspaper clash. The bairn was thought a living evidence of the fact."

"I wish, sir," interrupted the doctor, "that you would take time to explain what it is you allude to."

Andrew, then, with as much method as the flurry of his spirits would allow, related the mystery and suspicion which had attached to the child of the Rose and Crown, declaring his persuasion of Lady Sanddyford's perfect innocence; and that even "the black story" of her fainting in the arms of Ferrers, would prove, on examination, nothing worse than "the likeness of a ghost cawkit on a door."

The mind of the worthy rector seemed to derive some degree of satisfaction from this assurance; but he still deplored the wickedness of heart which instigated his nephew to abandon the poor Italian girl in a situation so interesting.

By this time supper was brought in, and Andrew having reflected a little more considerably on the business, agreed to remain where he was that night. Next morning, however, the doctor's servant was sent to the nearest town for a chaise, and, during his absence, the village was thrown into great consternation, in consequence of a nobleman and his servants having found the body of a man who had been robbed and murdered by two gipsies in the forest during the night. The story was incoherently told; but the circumstances, wild as they were, made our hero shrink with an involuntary feeling of apprehension, for he had no doubt that the robbers belonged to the gang he had met with. When the servant returned, he learned that the nobleman was Lord Sanddyford, and that his lordship was still at the inn, to attend the coroner's inquest, whither he resolved to proceed immediately.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE EXAMINATION.

ALTHOUGH Lord Sandford had allowed his spirits to sink after what was considered the full discovery of his lady's infidelity, still he occasionally rallied; and on hearing of his friend Mordaunt's marriage, summoned resolution enough to pay him a complimentary visit. In passing the forest early in the morning on his return from this visit, the post-boys who drove his lordship suddenly stopped, and the groom in attendance on horseback, riding up to the window of the carriage, informed him that the body of a man was lying on the road, and that he saw two men, gipsies by their appearance, part from it, and rush into the wood. The earl immediately ordered the body to be drawn off the high-road and laid on the grass, and the post-boys to make all the haste they could to the nearest town—the same to which our hero had sent for the post-chaise. On his arrival there, a party was immediately formed to bring the body, and to scour the forest in quest of the murderers; for it was not doubted that the gipsies who were scared from the body had perpetrated the deed.

By the time Doctor Saffron's servant had arrived at the rectory with the chaise, the body was brought to the inn where the earl was; and the two gipsies, the father and son, with whom Wylie had been so hospitably treated, were taken prisoners, and likewise carried to the town.

A coroner's inquest, in order to occasion as little delay as possible to the earl, was immediately held; and both the post-boys and his lordship's groom swore that the two gipsies were the persons whom they had seen quit the body on the approach of the carriage. Indeed, no doubt could be entertained of their guilt; for a gold watch and several other articles, which were known to be the property of the deceased, were found in their possession—the body being immediately recognized to be that of a Mr Knarl, who resided in the neighbourhood. A verdict of murder was accordingly pronounced against the prisoners,

and they were taken to the court-house before Sir Hubert Mowbray, the lord of the manor, and a justice of the peace.

The gipsies vehemently protested their innocence of the crime; but the young man confessed that he had plundered the body, declaring at the same time that he found it lying dead on the highway.

Sir Hubert was of opinion, and indeed all present concurred with him, that there never was a clearer case of guilt; and he added, from his own knowledge, that in passing through the forest with his servant late the preceding evening, he had seen two men by the moonlight skulking among the trees, and one of them he could almost himself swear was the younger prisoner.

The gipsy admitted that this was true, but said, he was conducting a gentleman who had lost his way in the forest, and in verification of this, presented our hero's card.

Sir Hubert looked at the card, and warmly expressed himself on the barefaced falsehood of the statement; saying it was absurd to suppose that any gentleman would, at such an hour, be passing the forest with such a guide; and he added, the probability rather was, that the card had been taken from the person of the unfortunate victim. All the gipsies, young and old, were present at the examination; and the grandmother, during the whole time, preserved a sort of emphatic silence, with her eye steadily and sternly fixed on the baronet; who, while commenting on the story, carelessly tore the card, and threw it on the floor. The boy who received the half-crown from Andrew, watched the old woman intently; and, on receiving a signal from her, stooped down and picked up the pieces.

At the close of the examination the father and son were ordered to prison. The rest of the family immediately retired. The father looked fiercely at Sir Hubert when he signed the warrant for their committal; and the young man, with horrible imprecations, exclaimed against the injustice of their doom; but while he was declaiming, the old woman touched her lip with her forefinger, and he instantly became silent, and followed his father quietly, but sullenly, to jail.

When Lord Sandvford, who had taken a deep interest in this impressive business returned from the examination, he sent in

quest of the gipsy women and their children, for the purpose of giving them some assistance, and to obtain an explanation of several circumstances which were not, in his opinion, very clearly made out. In fact, the whole proceedings had been conducted in a troubled and unsatisfactory manner. There was a tremor and haste about Sir Hubert, and a horror in the minds of the spectators, which at once awed and interested him. But his messenger was unsuccessful—the women, immediately on quitting the court-house, had left the town. This desertion of their relations did not improve the opinion which his lordship had formed of their character; and while he was speaking to the landlord on the subject, a post-chaise drove up to the door. The landlord, as in duty bound, left the room to attend the stranger; and the earl, going forward to the window, was agreeably surprised to see the little sidling figure of our hero alight; nor could he refrain from smiling when he saw Wylie pay the post-boy; and the lad, after receiving his optional, apply for an addition; and even after obtaining another sixpence, still go away grumbling.

Although Andrew had hastened with the express intention of communicating his joyful discovery respecting the mysterious child, a degree of diffidence overcame him when he entered the room, chiefly perhaps occasioned by the altered appearance of the earl; the elegant languor of whose expressive countenance was deepened into a pale and settled melancholy. "I am rejoiced to see you," cried his lordship, with an effort to be gay; "but I have one injunction to lay on you, that is, never to speak of Lady Sandford, or allude to her story, beyond what may be requisite to the business for which I wish your assistance."

"But if I bring you glad tidings of her purity, my lord," cried Andrew.

"The earl interrupted him, by saying, "It is not a matter in which I take now any interest, and I request you to be silent on the subject."

Wylie, as if he had received a blow on the forehead, staggered backward, and seated himself for some time without speaking. The earl was evidently affected by his mortification; but without noticing it, immediately began to relate the circumstances attending the discovery of the murder, and the singular story of

the younger gipsy repeating the card. This led our hero to recapitulate his own adventures in the forest.

"Then," said the earl, "the story of the gipsy, as to the manner in which he got the card, is perfectly true."

"As gospel," replied Wylie emphatically; "and, considering he's a gipsy, I'm far wrang if he isna an honest man, gin we make a proper allowance for his tod-like inclination to other folk's cocks and hens; but that's bred in him by nature, out of his neighbouring wi' puddocks and tairs, and other beasts of prey that den about dykes and ditches."

"But," said the earl, "the proof is so strong against him, that it is impossible to doubt." And his lordship then stated circumstantially what had taken place at the examination.

"The old woman is a pawkie carlin," said Andrew; "I saw that when I was supping their goose broth; and I could wager a boddle to a bawbee that the whole clanjamphrey of them are awa' to London to speer me out, in order to get me to bear testimony as to the card. But I wonder, my lord, that ye allowed the justice to rive the card!"

"It was of no consequence," replied his lordship, "because he had himself taken down your address."

"I dinna ken," said Andrew thoughtfully. "Howsever, I'll gang to the Tolbooth and see the gipsy lad, and hear what he has to say for himsel'. He's a toozie tyke in the looks, that maun be alloo't: but a rough husk often covers a sweet kernel."

CHAPTER XLIX.

PRESUMPTIVE EVIDENCE.

WHILE our hero and the earl were thus conversing together, Sir Hubert Mowbray was announced. He came to pay his respects to his lordship, and to express his hope and wish that he would attend the trial of the gipsies.

"I will undoubtedly be present," said the earl; "but unless

it is absolutely necessary for the ends of justice, I would decline being a witness."

Sir Hubert assured him that every due consideration would be paid to his lordship's feelings with respect to that point, and took his leave.

"I think," said the earl, "he does not appear to be pleased at the reservation I have expressed; but really it is so shocking a thing to be in any way concerned in offering up the sacrifices which the law so sternly requires, that a man may well be excused for being reluctant to bear witness in the case of a capital offence."

"He's certainly no content with something," said Wylie thoughtfully; "and I am sorry to see that he would fain hae the gipsy hanged. But he's no the first man I hae heard of that has a yearning for blood, and would hunt their fellow-creatures down even to the death, wi' an appetite in their minds as fell as the hunger of a rabiator. But, my lord, the gipsy, for the ends of justice, must be protected; and I'll go and see him immediately anent the same."

Lord Sandfyord was pleased with this alacrity. He had never given Andrew much credit for generosity; but the warmth of gratitude which he had manifested in his own case, with respect to the countess, and the interest which he now seemed to take in the fate of the friendless vagrants, convinced him that his merits did not entirely consist in his humour, nor in that intuitive perception of the manageable points of character, by which he had been so often surprised and diverted.

By the time our hero returned from the prison, the earl had ordered his carriage to be in readiness to convey them to Chasington Hall. But Wylie seemed in doubt and perplexity when he came back.

"The gipsy," said he, "is as innocent of the blood as the babe unborn. I could stake my right hand upon that—but for rifling the body, I hae little to say for him. I think, however, that it cannot be highway robbery; nor, indeed, any thing beyond the lifting of a waif, provided it can be shown that he was willing, upon certification of proof, to make restoration to the heir. Now the heir, in this case, has as yet made no demand."

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"As to that, whether it be law or not, I cannot presume to determine; but I must say it looks very like common sense," replied the earl; "and with respect to the murder, if you can clear him of that, I should think the robbery will not place him in any very perilous jeopardy. It will, I fear, however, Wylie, be a difficult task to prove, to the satisfaction of any judge or jury, that two gipsies seen near a murdered man, and afterwards found with property in their possession known to have been about the person of the deceased, were not guilty of the murder."

"I own it, my lord; but when I hae the right end of the string, I never despair. A deed has been done—somebody did it; but that somebody is no the poor ne'er-do-weel gipsies—or guilt has more guises than hypocrisy can put on."

"I certainly," observed the earl, "would rely, in any case, Wylie, where management was requisite, on your sagacity; but facts are stubborn things, and a gipsy is from his birth mulcted of more than half the rights of any other man."

"That's no to be disputed, my lord; a gipsy's character, a hachel's slovenliness, and a waster's want, are three things as far beyond a' remedy, as a blackamoor's face, a club-foot, or a short temper. But, as your lordship weel observes, facts are stubborn things; they are stepping-stones in the mire, and it is by them that I hope the do-na-gude may get over his present danger; at least, I'll try to lend him a helping hand. But no to trust altogether to the weakness of my own judgment, I'll hasten to London for the advice of some more experienced head."

"Then you will not go with me to Chastington?" said the earl.

"Your lordship maunna expect it in an instance of life and death like this; but, gin ye please, I'll take a nook in the carriage wi' you as far as the road lies in my way. It's however on a bargain that your lordship winna try to sift any more of my opinion in this business."

"Agreed!" cried the earl; "and I presume, as you were on your way when you halted here, you will have no objection to set off with me immediately."

"Hooly, hooly, my lord!" exclaimed Wylie, resuming his wonted familiarity; "there maun be twa words about that. In

the first place, I'm neither a swallow nor a camelion, to feed on the air of the lift; and, in the second, a journey requires provender."

While the waiter was laying the cloth for some refreshment, Andrew went down to the stable-yard of the inn, and sauntering for a few minutes, apparently without an object, asked a post-boy which of his comrades had been with Lord Sandfyord, and the lad having pointed them out, he went towards them, and said, "Hech, sirs! but it was a terrible job ye had o't wi' my lord. I wonder, for my part, that ye hae got so soon the better o't, that ye can already whistle sae light-heartedly. How, in the name o' gude, did ye no notice the man? if ye hadna driven like deevils ouer him, maybe he might hae recovered."

The post-boys stared at an imputation which had never entered any other head, and one of them declared that the man must have been dead several hours. The other also as stoutly asserted, that the body was stiff and cold; indeed, so much so, that it was like a log when he assisted to drag it from the road upon the grass. Wylie made no remark on this circumstance, but treasured it up in his own mind. It was certainly not at all probable, that if the gipsies had killed and robbed the man at the same time, they would have returned to the body; and the declaration of the son, that he had found it lying dead on the road, when disturbed in plundering it by the approach of Lord Sandfyord's carriage, derived some confirmation from this testimony.

Our hero himself could bear witness for the gipsy, from the time he had joined the rest of the band at supper; and Doctor Saffron and his servants would be satisfactory evidence of the hour of his arrival at the gate of the parsonage.

"About what time," said Andrew to the post-boys, "was the deceased last seen alive?"

Nobody in the stable-yard could give any satisfactory answer; but Sir Hubert Mowbray's groom happening to come in, on hearing the question, stated, that he and his master had passed him on the road about ten o'clock, and not far from the spot where the murder had been committed.

Andrew recollected that ten was struck on the church clock as he was standing at the parsonage-gate—and the gipsy had

only then just left him, and could not be seven miles distant, for so far off the murder had been committed, till at least an hour after. But he only observed to the groom, that he and his master had not passed long before the murder was committed, as it appeared the deceased could not have walked far from the spot where they had seen him. This remark startled the fellow, and our hero saw his confusion; but, taking no notice of it, changed the current of his enquiries to some general reflections on the atrocity of the crime, and the strong circumstances that bore against the gipsies. In the course, however, of a few minutes, he said to the groom, "I wonder that you and your master were not afraid to be wandering through the forest at that time o' night, like two babes in the wood."

"Bless your heart," replied the groom, "we never fears no nothing there at all, besides being, as you sees, on horseback. Why, soon after we passed that there poor soul who has been killed, master sent me off to order a po-shay here for him in the morning, to take him over to Sir Thomas Fowler's fox-chase, and rode home himself."

"Yes," said one of the post-boys, "we lost a good something by the job; for Sir Hubert in the morning could not have the chaise, till so be it that these murderers were done for, and now he won't go at all till the 'sizes are over.'"

"To be sure," said our hero, "it wouldna be a decent thing of him, as a magistrate, to be jaunting and gallanting about the country, when such a judgment has happened at his own door. I dare say, poor gentleman, it gives him great concern."

"You may say that," replied the groom, "for he has done nothing all day but fidget about, ordering and counter-ordering; and I don't wonder at it, for the dead man owed him a power of money for rent—and I suppose, now he's gone, that master won't touch a farding."

Some difference arose among the post-boys and menials, as to the law of this opinion. In their discussion Andrew took no part, but walked away thoughtfully, as if he intended to return into the house, when suddenly he turned round, and cried to the groom, "Hey, Thomas Fowler, I want to speak to you!" beckoning to him at the same time. "From what you say,

Thomas, of the poor man that was killed, I fear his family will be very ill off. Thomas—your name's Thomas Fowler, I think you said?"

"Lord bless you!" said the man; "my name's Robert Jenkins—it's master's friend they call Sir Thomas Fowler; and as for Mr Knarl, who has been killed, he had never no family at all, being you sees a single man."

"But I suppose he has died much and justly lamented by all who knew him," said Andrew.

"As for that," replied Robert Jenkins, "I cannot for a surety take it on me to say; but I knows he was a damned hard-mouthed chap, and never could give no civil answer at all."

"Then, after all, Robert Jenkins, I'm thinking there has been greater losses at the Shirra Muir than his death," said our hero, and abruptly returned into the house; and, despatching his repast, entered the carriage with Lord Sandfyord, and was hastily driven off.

CHAPTER L.

SAGACITY

WYLIE, from his arrival in London, had continued to lodge with Mrs Callender till Mr Vellum took possession of Sandfyord House, when the solicitor, apprehensive that the earl might change his mind, not choosing to dispose of his own residence, gave it in custody to Jacob, an elderly married man, who acted as his porter and special messenger. With him Andrew was allowed the use of a bed and parlour; and the address on the card given to the gipsy was, in consequence of this arrangement, from the house in Queen's Square.

It was late in the evening when, after parting from Lord Sandfyord, he reached London; and on entering Queen's Square, he found a mob assembled round the house, and the gipsy woman, as he suspected, already there; and on advancing towards them,

he found they had been ordered into custody by Jacob for besieging the door.

The gipsies soon recognised him, and clamorously and in tears claimed his promised protection. He had no difficulty in divining the motive of their pertinacious visit; and interfering in their behalf with the officers, as he was well known in the neighbourhood, readily obtained their deliverance. He then requested the constables to advise the crowd to disperse, while he directed Jacob to receive the vagrants into the kitchen, and get them something to eat.

While the gipsies were descending into the area, their benefactor was admitted by the hall door; and, on entering the parlour, he said to Jacob, "I dare say that auld gipsy wife is a daub baith at cawk and keel. What think ye?"

"I don't doubt it, sir," replied Jacob, who was not altogether an infidel in gipsy prophecy.

"Ah," cried Andrew, "I suppose ye hae been getting your fortune spae't."

Jacob firmly denied the fact. "Indeed," said he, "the gipsies were very sullen, and have been sleeping on the steps all the afternoon; and when we ordered them away, they said, you would not have done so, and complained bitterly of having travelled a great way to see you, and showed us one of your cards all patched."

"Did they say nothing of the end's errand they had come upon?"

"No," replied Jacob; "but they were much cast down to hear that it was uncertain when you would be back; and so, as they would not go away from the door, I ordered them into custody."

"That was very prudent in you, Jacob; and as I would like to ken what they want wi' me, just slip down and bring up the auld woman; and hear ye, Jacob, tak tent that ye leave no spoons nor sma' things lying loose about; for the gypsies hae tarry fingers, and ye would need an e'e in your neck to watch them."

As soon as the old woman was ushered into the parlour, our hero said to her, "Ye haena been blate nor late, honest woman,

in paying me a visit. What's happened to you, and whar's your gudeman and your son?"

The gipsy faithfully reported the whole proceedings, with which our hero was already acquainted; and the unvarnished accuracy of her narration made him respect her veracity. Towards the conclusion of her story, she became animated and agitated, especially when she described the scene which took place at the examination; asserting, with great vehemence, that Sir Hubert Mowbray himself was the murderer.

"Base scoot!" exclaimed Andrew, affecting more indignation than he felt; "what puts such a thought into your head?"

The old woman made no reply, but looked steadily in his face for some time; and then added, "What I say is true; and you believe me."

"Wheesht, wheesht, ye auld runt; you ought to be flung into a mill-dam, and left to sink as a Christian or swim as a witch. But what reason hae ye for this notion?"

"Why was he so greedy," cried the accuser, "of every thing against my son? The hope of safety flushed on his cheeks, and glistened in his eyes, whenever any thing came up against him. Why did he tear your card? I saw deceit in his visage when he did it. I doubt if he has written down the true name; for I watched the motion of his fingers in the act, and they ran not in the way the letters on the card do. His hand was shaking at the time, albeit he is a man of a stout heart."

This suggestion with respect to the card made the blood run cold in our hero's veins; and, as he eyed the old woman with a wary and eager look, he said, "Ye're no canny, gudewife—ye're no canny. But gang awa' back to your ain country side; and when the trial comes on, I'll be there."

The sybil made no reply to this; but, with a token of respect, moved to leave the room. On reaching the door, however, as she took hold of the handle, she turned round, and said solemnly, "I can see the light through the horn, and the bird in the shell."

"Cast nane o' your cantrips here, lucky, but do as I bid you," said our hero, seriously alarmed. In the same moment he rang the bell, she opened the door; and smiling with an expression

that might be described as full of a mysterious and benignant superiority, again curtsied and withdrew.

Jacob, guessing the occasion of his summons, conducted the gipsy down to the kitchen in the first place, and then returned to his master.

"Jacob," said our hero to him as he entered the room, "I redd you tak tent o' that carlin, and use her and the bairns discreetly, for I trow she has mair insight than honest folks; and I warn you to cross her loof wi' siller. There's five shillings to you, to help you to get well rid o' her out o' the house."

Jacob was not a little impressed with this speech; and was beginning to relate many well-authenticated stories of gipsy witchery, when he was cut short by Wylie, who, already sufficiently eerie, said, "Ye need say nae mair about them; for their power and discernment is no to be disputed. They're capable to mak the like o' you, Jacob, believe that spade-shafts will bear plums; so look to yoursel', Jacob, or wha kens what may befall you?"

Jacob's countenance underwent several changes during this speech, and still more when Andrew continued, "And noo, Jacob, when I think o't, we maun gie something to the young woman and the bairns, that we may get a waff o' their good-will likewise. Ye'll gie the mither this half-crown, and a shilling a-piece to the wee anes; and if your wife can lay her hands on a claught o' any thing eatable for the family to tak wi' them, for God's sake tell her no to be scant or scrimpit; for heaven only knows what will be the o'ercome o' this visitation."

By this time Jacob was standing pale and wan, and our hero saw that it was quite unnecessary to put him more upon his guard, either with respect to the wiles of the gipsies or to impress him with the necessity of getting well quit of them. Indeed, when Jacob went down stairs, nothing was too good for the gipsies, who soon after departed highly satisfied; bestowing their kindest benedictions in a manner, as Jacob said, that could scarcely have been expected almost from a Christian.

CHAPTER LI.

A FRIENDLESS BARRISTER.

WHEN the old woman had retired, our hero went immediately to Sandysford House to consult Mr Vellum, who expressed great surprise at seeing him so soon back. He was, however, too much a man of the world to make any enquiries; but when Andrew mentioned that he had fallen in with the earl on the road, and, in consequence of some things connected with that meeting, he had been induced to return to town, he was not altogether satisfied in his own mind, and thought his lordship showed something like a prejudicial partiality, in confiding so much in a person so far below himself in the consideration of the world; nor was this apprehensive feeling allayed, when Andrew said, "Noo, Mr Vellum, I want your assistance in a great cause that I have taken in hand, for a person to whom, in a time of straits, I was indebted for no small civility. Lord Sandysford, as well as myself, is concerned in the occasion. It's no in the eye of the world a thing by common, nor, in truth, what ye would be fashed with; but I'm bound in gratitude and humanity, Mr Vellum, to see the parties righted. Two decent men in their way, a father and a son, Mr Vellum, are accused of having committed a trespass; but there is some reason to jealousy the true trespasser is a person of great power and consideration, and who, to save his own carcass, wouldna scruple to sacrifice my two frien's. What I therefore want, and nobody knows better whom to recommend than yoursel', is some sharp and fearless young lad that has his bread to bake at the bar, that I may employ him at my own cost, Mr Vellum, to assist the twa poor men out o' their difficulties; for really the circumstances look hard against them. In truth, it's a knotty case, and will require patience of thought, as well as bravery o' mind, sic as nae first-rater can afford to give, and deal justly with other clients; and yet it's just a case that a first-rater is alone capable of handling to a proper issue. On that account, I want talents of the first quality, and leisure to allow them to be thoroughly applied."

Why our hero should have thrown such a haze of mysticism over the business, must be left for the consideration of those who can penetrate into the depths of his peculiar character. It had the effect, however, of leading the solicitor to suspect that this said great cause was connected with the imputed infidelities of the countess, in which, from the previous declaration of the earl, he supposed his lordship was averse, at least for the present, to appear personally.

Accordingly, under this impression, and believing that in due time the management of the ultimate proceedings would devolve into his own hands, he mentioned several young men then coming forward at the bar, with the promise of ability. But Wylie objected to them all, as being more ambitious to make a figure themselves than to set forward the causes of their clients to the best advantage. At last he hit upon one that he thought would answer.

"Do the circumstances require any aid from eloquence?" said Vellum.

"No," replied our hero; "but we'll want a paper of great pith drawn up for the defence."

"Then," replied Vellum, "I recommend you to secure Blondell. He is a young man of very singular accomplishments, and owing to an impediment in his speech, he can never become eminent as a pleader; but he is an impressive writer, and is besides possessed of a curiously constituted mind, and a strong natural power of observation."

"He has been made on purpose for my turn," replied our hero, "if he answers your description; so I beg ye'll gie me two or three lines to him, that I may confer with him mysel' in private; for there are some points in the business that canna very well be set forth in a brief. Over and above all, although my Lord Sandysford's a principal witness, his lordship would fain decline appearing; and ye ken we maun suit oursel's to his humour, to the best of our ability."

Vellum immediately wrote a note to Blondell, introducing Wylie to him, and requesting his particular attention to the object and purpose of his visit. With this note, our hero pro-

ceeded directly to Clement's Inn, where the obscure chambers of this neglected son of genius were situated.

Blondell was at home, and the moment that he had read the introductory note, Andrew said, in his abrupt manner, "Ye see, sir, that I have a notion to become acquaintit with you; and ye're a man, or I'm wrang informed, of ouer mickle discernment, no to be sensible that I must hae some particular reason for taking such an extraordinary freedom, especially when I tell you that the business, wherein I stand in need of your help, is no ane that ony regular brief can be made up on. In a word, Mr Blondell, I want you to go into the country with me, in order to assist in the defence of two friendless gipsies, who stand accused of murder. I believe them innocent, and I think I can guess who the true murderer is; but as I would do nothing on suspicion, I mean to confine oursel's to the defence of my clients. For this business ye can hae nae fee in the usual way; but I'll bear all your expenses, and make you a reasonable compensation for the loss o' time; and if we succeed, as I doubt not we shall, I hae some hope ye'll make such friends by the business, as will put their shoulders to your wheels throughout the rest o' your life.'

The plainness of this address produced the desired effect. Blondell said he would accept the proposal at once.

"In truth, Mr Wylie," said he, with a feeling which added considerably to his natural difficulty in expressing himself, "I have not at this time much to do, and I am obliged, you see, to betake myself to other studies than those of my profession."

Our hero looked at his table, and saw on it several volumes, consisting of novels, travels, and poetry.

"These," said Blondell, "are my pot-boilers. I am obliged to do all manner of literary labour, under all possible varieties of name."

"It's weel for you, Mr Blondell, that you can do so; but ye maun give up meddling with sic clishmaclavers as novels and ballads, and lend your whole power and pith to me. I dinna, however, wish you to work cossnent wark, that is, without meat or wage; so I beg ye'll come and tak' your dinner in a private secrecy wi' me, at Mr Vellum's house, in Queen's Square; and

by that time I'll be provided wi' a bit of Abrah'm Newlands' paper, to help to keep the banes green till we see what's to be done with the twa ne'er-do-weels that I hae ta'en by the hand."

Blondell was much amused by the originality of our hero's manner, and readily accepted the invitation.

CHAPTER LII.

DOUBTS.

"JA" said our hero, when the old man admitted him on his return from the interview with Blondell, "there's a great man to dine wi' me the morn, so ye'll see and hae every thing in the best order, and tell your wife to gie us a spice of her skill in cookery, and see that you can behave yoursel' on the occasion. For he's somewhat o' an odd way, and may come no just, as by rights he ought to do, in his own carriage, but in aine of the blackguard hackneys, or aiblins on his feet. They call him Mr Blondell; and when once he has come, mind I'm no at home to ony living creature, no, not even to my Lord Sandyford an he were to come to town, nor to aine lower than the king himself, whom you know we are all bound to serve and obey to within an inch of our lives. So I hope you will take heed to what I am telling you."

Jacob was not altogether without need of an exhortation of this kind; for Andrew had observed that he was a great respecter of persons, and anticipated that the simple air and plain attire of Blondell were not calculated to gain much of his reverence.

At the hour appointed the barrister came, and was received with the utmost deference and consideration; but, as Wylie expected, he arrived on foot, under the protection of only an umbrella, although the weather was drizzling. Jacob's wife, on her part, was none deficient; and when dinner was over, the door of the dining-room was closed, and admission to all and every sort of visitors strictly prohibited.

Our hero then entered into a circumstantial relation of the whole case. He described, first, his own adventures with the gipsies; then the circumstances under which the body was found; and lastly, the examination, as it had been reported by Lord Sandford. In this he neither extenuated nor exaggerated, but related the details as accurately as he could recollect. He, however, kept carefully out of view his own reflections on the business, his discoveries in the stable-yard, and his interview with the gipsy woman, and her suspicions, saying, "Noo, Mr Blondell, what I have been telling you is the case, as it will come on before the court. What's your aff-hand opinion o't, for all that I hae said will be proven by evidence?"

"Whether the gipsies are guilty or not guilty," replied Blondell, "they will be condemned. No jury can resist facts so strong, nor presumptions so striking. But you said, that in your mind you believed the gipsies innocent, and that you thought you knew who the real murderer is. Let me know upon what this opinion is founded."

Wylie looked earnestly at Blondell, and after a pause of about a minute, said, "There are some things that shoot up in our fancies, that we would need to guard even frae the ear of friendship; for unless they prove true, the disclosure will make fools of us, and gin they are true, we dare scarcely own them—they so far surpass the guesses of human wisdom." He then described the manner of Sir Hubert Mowbray during the interview with the earl. "He was a man," said he, "fey wi' something on his mind. There was a sort of inward fury about his thoughts, his eyes were gleg and suspicious, and full of fear, and his words were quick, and of an uneven and unnatural sound."

"Your observations are shrewd and impressive, but there is nothing in them that can be available on the trial. They might help to swell the interest of a winter's tale, but cannot be urged in court, nor are they susceptible of being brought out in evidence," said Blondell.

Our hero then resumed, and related with minute accuracy what afterwards passed in the stable-yard. The moment that he adverted to the dispatching of Jenkins the groom for a post-chaise, Blondell clapped his hands eagerly, and exclaimed, "The

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gipsies may be saved; but we must still have something stronger against Sir Hubert, before we can venture to reckon on their acquittal. We must throw suspicion upon him."

Wylie then mentioned his own conversation with the gipsy woman, and her suspicion that the magistrate had not written down the address that was on the card.

"There will be no other witnesses summoned," said Blondell, "but those who were examined at the coroner's inquest; and as Jenkins the groom was not there, I should not be surprised if he were sent out of the way."

At this juncture, the bell of the street door was impatiently rung, and soon after the gipsy boy was heard clamorous in the hall. Wylie expressed his astonishment at the circumstance, and going to the room door, desired the boy to come in, and tell him what had happened.

The poor creature was jaded and heated, and so entirely covered with mud, that he looked more like a statue of clay than a human being. Jacob was ordered to retire; and the boy then related that, as he was returning with his mother and grandmother to the town where his father and grandfather were imprisoned, they had passed a stage-coach, on the top of which was Jenkins, the magistrate's groom, and that his grandmother ordered him to dog him at all hazards.

"I thereupon," said the boy, "ran in and below the coach, and, hugging the perch, came with it to London, and the man is now at the inn where it put up."

"Ye're a clever callant, and it's a pity ye're a gipsy," said our hero; "but go down to the kitchen and get something to eat, and there's a half-a-crown to help you to a lodging; look sharp, however, after Jenkins, and dinna let him think he's watched. The hand of heaven," said our hero piously, when the gipsy had left the room in charge of Jacob, who was summoned to conduct him down stairs, "is visibly stretched forth in this bloody work. Jenkins must be subpoenaed on our side;" which was done the following morning, not a little to his surprise, and the consternation of his master.

Blondell having acquired, in conversation with our hero at different times, the sort of information which we have described,

accompanied him, a few days prior to the assizes, to the town where the gipsies were imprisoned, and where they found the docm of the poor outcast creatures considered as sealed. Numberless stories of their atrocities reconciled the humanity of the inhabitants to the ignominious destiny that awaited them.

It was of consequence to the success of the defence, that the character of Sir Hubert Mowbray, and of the state of intercourse which had existed between him and the deceased, should be thoroughly ascertained. With respect to the former, there was no difficulty; the character of Sir Hubert stood high among his neighbours; he inherited from his father an ample patrimony, which he had materially improved. The whole country, indeed, applauded his general conduct; but there were a few invidious persons who qualified their praises with some insinuations against his implacable spirit, alleging that he was even as persevering in his resentments as he was zealous in his friendships; and that, if he had not been so prosperous, he might have proved a bitter and malicious character. "He is a man," said Blondell one evening to Andrew, as they were comparing notes together in the inn where they had taken up their abode, "whose success seems to deter people from speaking out what they think of him."

The enquiries respecting his intercourse with the murdered man were not, however, so easily answered. Their condition in life had been so very different, and the issue of their respective fortunes had also been so dissimilar, that nothing of the nature of an intimacy existed between them. In the outset of life, the deceased had been in a better sphere, and when a young man, was admitted into the best societies in the country; but falling into irregular habits, he had gradually lost caste. Towards him it was said that Sir Hubert had acted very generously; never particularly pressing him for the payment of his rent, which was generally in arrears.

Blondell, on receiving this account, began to waver in his suspicions. He still thought that the gipsies were not guilty of the murder; but he could not bring himself to believe that a gentleman of Sir Hubert Mowbray's character, so friendly to the deceased as he was represented to have been, was likely to

be hastily betrayed into the commission of so foul a deed; for it seemed to him that, if he had committed the murder, it must have been on premeditation, from the circumstance of sending his groom to order the post-chaise, after he had confessedly passed Mr Knarl in the forest.

"Had the groom," said Blondell, "been previously dispatched, it might, as it is reported that Knarl was a hard-mouthed fellow, have been reasonable to suppose that they had quarrelled perhaps about his arrears, and that in the quarrel a hasty and fatal blow was inflicted. But according to the facts, and in unison with our information, it does not appear to me that Sir Hubert could have had any motive for the perpetration of the crime; I am therefore disposed to think that it must have been committed by another—some unknown individual."

Andrew could not reply to these observations; but he still adhered to his own opinion, that the baronet, and he alone, was the guilty. At the same time, he was convinced that unless the blood could be very clearly brought home to some other than the unfortunate gipsies, the probability was, from the prejudices entertained against them, that they would be inevitably cast. He therefore remained some time silent and thoughtful after Blondell had paused; and when the other said to him, "What is your opinion now?" he replied, "It's no easy to say what I think; but although it's an old story since Sir Hubert and the deceased were on any footing of equality, there might have been matter for a grudge between them then; the which, from the constancy of the baronet's nature, may have been treasured up for a day of reckoning. I have heard of Highlander gentlemen nursing revenge from generation to generation, and visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children; and I jalousie that what's done in the north may be likewise done in the south, especially when I hear of folk possessed wi' a Highland durenness of temper. I wouldna marvel, Mr Blondell, that some taunt at the races in their youth, or the whisking away of a partner at a ball, had become motive enough, in the breast of a man with Sir Hubert's pride and perseverance, to grow to the foul head of this murder."

Blondell was struck with the remark; and after remaining some time reflecting with himself, said, "What you observe is

certainly not improbable; and perhaps, instead of troubling ourselves any more about the intercourse of latter years, we should try to ascertain what sort of intimacy existed between them in their youth."

But the assizes were to commence in two days, and there seemed to be no means before the trial left to obtain access to the sources of this information. Our hero, however, suggested an expedient that surprised Blondell even more than the ingenuity he had hitherto shown. It was no less than to employ the old gipsy woman in the enquiry.

CHAPTER LIII.

CONSULTATIONS.

FOR some days prior to the arrival of our hero and Blondell, the poor gipsy women and the children had been seen trotting about the skirts of the town. At first they pitched their tent under the hedge on the road leading to the mansion of Sir Hubert Mowbray; but he ordered his servants to drive them away. Being thus forced to change the place of their encampment, they removed to a lane behind the inn, where the servants about the stables, in compassion for their misfortune, sometimes consoled with them on the fate of their relations. As often, however, as this was done, the children began to weep bitterly, and their mother sat dejected and silent; while the old woman, dilating as with the energy of the inspired Pythia, astonished her auditors with her fierce and oracular predictions. In the midst of one of these rapturous paroxysms, Sir Hubert sent them some money, and requested them to retire from the neighbourhood until the trial was over. In an instant, as if actuated by one spirit, the whole group started up, and with loud and vehement imprecations against the injustice of man, demanded the interposition of heaven. Nothing, however, escaped them to betray in the slightest degree their suspicion of Sir Hubert, except a

rash and indignant repulse, by the boy, of the servant's hand who offered them the money. The old woman, observing the action, became at once calm, and making a sign to the others, silenced them also, while she took the money, saying significantly, "It is sent by Providence to enable us to get help to prove who is indeed the true murderer."

The whole of this scene produced a profound sensation among the bystanders, and some of them began to doubt if the gipsies were guilty; while all regarded the forlorn family with sentiments of compassion and charity. A small collection was in consequence raised for them on the spot; and the benevolent feeling in which it originated spreading through the town, a considerable sum was soon raised.

It being known among the servants of the inn that Blondell was a barrister; soon after his arrival, the old woman had come with the money in her hand to solicit his assistance. Blondell at first refused the money; but our hero signified to him that he ought, in the mean time, to accept it.

"It is necessary," said he, "that we should not appear overly voluntary in this affair, till we get a better grip o' the case, and ye must just submit to be thought lightly of for a season."

The effect of taking the money was what Andrew anticipated; and the meanness of Blondell was every where loudly condemned. Some of his brethren of the long robe, on reaching the town that evening, when they heard of the transaction, made a great stir about the respectability of the profession, and treated Blondell with unequivocal marks of their contempt, all of which he endured with invulnerable fortitude. Thus, not only were the prisoners already sentenced in public opinion, but their counsel condemned as obscure and incapable, and, both in principles and practice, a disgrace to the bar. It required no little resolution on his part to bear this with patience; and more than once he expressed his apprehensions to Wylie, that the prejudice against them would be fatal to their clients. Andrew, however, was none dismayed. He had embarked in the business, and with that undeviating perseverance which no casualty seemed to affect, he resolutely went forward.

In pursuance of the plan which our hero had suggested, as we

noticed at the conclusion of the last chapter, the old gipsy was sent for, and when she entered the room, he said, "Noo, lucky, I have a hankering to get a fortune told, and as ye have no doubt some slight with cawk and keel, I would fain hae the help o' your hand in that business."

The old woman looked at him with a keen and inquisitive eye; and then turning round to Blondell, and raising her left hand over her eyes, as if the sun dazzled them, steadily also perused every trait and feature of his countenance. "Neither of you, I see," said she calmly, "would at this time trifle with the grief of a miserable old woman. What's your pleasure? Whose fortune would you have me read?"

"Come, come, lucky," cried our hero, "none of your antic cantrips with me. I have a notion that ye can spae best, when ye know something about the history of your customers; and that it's easier to read thirty years of a dead man's life, than three days of what's to happen to the living. Now the fortune that we want told is the murdered man's; and ye maun try in your canny way to get us some account of his green years, before the blight fell on him. Find out whether he has suffered the cross of faithless love, or treacherous friendship: What blink of an evil eye marred his flourishing: Or whether he has had occasion to dread or feel the enmity of any secret adversary."

Blondell seemed to think, that perhaps the old woman would not understand this sort of language, and added, "We wish, in fact, good woman, to know if, in early life, there was ever any quarrel"——

Andrew checked him abruptly, saying, "Toot, toot, man, we'll no get at the truth if ye tell what ye want. This carlin here can cleck lies enew to satisfy you, if lies would serve. Gude-wife, ye ken very weel what we want. Gang and learn a' ye can, and then come back as soon as possible."

The old woman, for about half a minute, stood erect and silent, as if she was inwardly pondering with herself; and then, as it were, coming out of her trance, she looked cheerfully at Andrew, and immediately left the room.

When she had retired, Blondell said it would be necessary to prepare something for the prisoners to read in their defence,

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whatever might be the course that circumstances might afterwards require him to pursue; and for this purpose he went to his own room that he might not be disturbed, Lord Sandyford, who had written to our hero on hearing he had arrived, being then hourly expected. It, however, occurred to Andrew, as the gipsies could not read—as Blondell stuttered—as judges, however clear in their delivery, are seldom good readers—and as he himself was a very bad one, that it would be of great consequence to obtain somebody to read the defence, upon the proper effect of which much might depend, both with the court and the jury.

In deliberating with himself on this point, the bold idea once or twice presented itself, that if Lord Sandyford could be induced to undertake the important task, the effect of his lordship's rank, with the pathos and grace of his elocution, would be in the highest degree effective; and by the time the earl arrived, he had resolved to speak to him on the subject.

Accordingly, next day, on his lordship's arrival, after their first salutations were over, he said, "Although, my lord, I have no doubt of the poor gipsies' innocence of the murder, yet there are great difficulties in the way of an effectual defence. In the first place, they can neither write nor read; secondly, Mr Blondell, whom I have brought with me to stand up for them, is a dreadful stammerer; and, thirdly, your lordship knows that the judge is such a desperate drone, that were he to read the defence, the likelihood is, that he would croon the jury asleep, instead of moving either their hearts or understandings to yield towards the prisoners. This fashes me, and I really am greatly at a loss."

"I should have thought," said the earl, "that you would have provided a fitter advocate than the one you seem to have chosen."

"I had my reasons," replied Andrew, "for what I have done; and could I but get any body with a rational portion of common sense, to read the paper that Mr Blondell is now preparing, I would not despair of an acquittal."

Lord Sandyford appeared a little struck with the first part

of this remark, and said, "I certainly ought not to question that you have acted in this matter with your characteristic sagacity; but I am surprised that you attach so much importance to any thing that can be said in a paper. The court and jury will be governed entirely by the facts that come out in evidence."

Andrew then explained to him, that, for reasons within his own breast, he did not wish that any thing should arise to lessen the prejudice against the prisoners, till the whole case for the crown was closed; and he informed his lordship of the light in which Blondell and himself, he had reason to believe, were considered both by the bench and the bar.

The earl was perplexed, and said, "I am thoroughly persuaded that the method you have chosen is equally prudent and wise, although I do not very distinctly perceive in what manner it is to be of use to the poor prisoners."

"Of the effect," replied Wylie, "I have no doubt; but it's a terrible thing that there's no a man, wi' humanity enough, able to read the paper as it should be read. The judge will mumble it; and were I to ask ony o' the barristers, the chance is, that they would turn with a snort both from it and me."

"I cannot think," rejoined the earl, "that there is any such mighty difficulty in the way. Were it not contrary to the rules and forms of the court, I should have no objection to read it myself."

"That's a very charitable and kind proposition on your lordship's part; and I am sure there is no obstacle of law against it. Ye'll be sitting, I see warrant, on the bench; and when the time comes I can hand up the paper to your lordship, as it were for the judge, and your lordship can then, just in an easy way, ask leave to read the paper; for Mr Blondell writes a sma' narrow crabbit hand, and the judge is an old man, that to a certainty never could well make it out."

The earl smiled, and said, "This is too much. From the first, Wylie, you have been contriving to get me to undertake this business. I see through it all; and I give you credit for the way in which you made the proposal come from myself. However, I will so far humour you in this task of mercy, as to

play into your hands. But as Blondell writes such 'a sma' narrow crabbit hand,' it is highly necessary that I should peruse his paper before attempting to read it from the bench."

During the remainder of the evening, nothing particularly passed with his lordship, who, being somewhat fatigued by his journey from Chastington Hall, retired early; while Blondell and our hero sat up, in expectation of hearing something of the gipsy.

CHAPTER LIV.

INFERENCES.

ABOUT midnight the old woman made her appearance with a haggard expression of exultation and triumph in her eyes. The moment that the waiter who showed her into the room had retired, and the door was closed behind him, she rushed eagerly towards our hero, and, raising her left hand, shook it mysteriously; at the same time elevating also the forefinger of her right, she hurriedly began to speak to the following effect:—

"Fate and death are on the road; I hear them coming; but I see an angel of glory standing beside you that will daunt them from passing to harm me or mine. The dead man and his murderer were plants of the same spring time; and when their heads were green, the blasted and the fallen was the gayest and the proudest. They were boon companions: a lily grew in the valley, and they both stretched out their hands: the dead man won the flower, but from that day his fortune began to fade: the cry of a rifled maiden went up to heaven and brought down the mildew; and the spite of a thwarted lover, like the invisible fire that withers the summer bough, secretly worked its decay."

"Hooly, hooly, lucky," cried Andrew, while Blondell sat admiring the sybilline energy of the hag: "come down out of the clouds, and set by your broomstick; for though we can otte a guess at the substance of your raving, we mann have something more to the purpose. The lily ye're making a' this ranting about

was just some young lass, and the valley it grew in was, I trow, nothing else than some cottar's shed; so speak to the point, lucky, and fash us nae mair with your hieroglyphicals."

"I can but speak," cried the gipsy earnestly, "as ye have heard. There is no malice like that of a disappointed lover; nor a deadlier foe than an angered friend. The grass has long been green over Alice Cresswell's bosom; but the hate of her baffled lover could only be quenched in blood. Thrice seven times has the leaf fallen since she was laid in the earth, and every time the fortunes of her betrayer were left barer."

"Weel, but tell us whar ye heard a' this ravelled clishmaclavers," exclaimed Andrew peevishly.

The old woman, however, had no other way of expressing herself except in her gipsy jargon, and that was still more unintelligible. Blondell, however, interposed; and by dint of a long and patient questioning, ascertained that when Knarl and Sir Hubert were young men, they had both attempted to seduce Alice Cresswell, a gamekeeper's daughter, and that Knarl became the favoured lover. In consequence of which, from being intimate friends, they became for some time deadly enemies; and that Sir Hubert, being a person of greater opulence than his rival, contrived to thwart him in all his undertakings, until he had brought him to the verge of ruin; that Knarl was perfectly sensible of his malign influence, although it was so managed that he could not openly charge him with any fraud or design; and took, on all occasions, every opportunity of fastening a quarrel on his enemy, but without success. At last, by this intemperance having worked his own exclusion from the society of gentlemen, he fell into dissipated habits, which completed his degradation.

In this stage of his misfortunes, Sir Hubert then stepped forward, and, seemingly with great magnanimity, entreated him to forget the grudge that had so long subsisted between them, and generously offered to befriend him. Knarl knew his rival too well to trust much to the sincerity of his professions; but the pressure of distress, and that laxity of the sense of honour which adversity ever causes, overcame his scruples, and he accepted of a farm, on liberal terms, from his enemy. The conduct of the baronet

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had all the outward characteristics of generosity, and the affair redounded much to his credit; but still Knarl suspected that something lurked at the bottom of the cup which had been so unexpectedly and so warmly proffered; for occasionally when flushed with wine, he would give vent to his suspicions; and on the day prior to the murder, something of this kind had taken place, with a threat of exposure.

Such was the substance of the information which the old gipsy had obtained. It seemed to present nothing available to the defence of the prisoners; and when the poor woman retired, Blondell shook his head, and spoke as if he considered their case hopeless. Not so our hero: he made no remark, but sat thoughtfully for some time: he then began to move about, and finally, to pace the room in perplexity, halting every now and then, as if he intended to speak, but as often checking himself.

Blondell, who by this time had acquired a profound respect for his sagacity, remained silent, watching his motions with interest and curiosity. At last Andrew resumed his seat, and said, "I think, Mr Blondell, this gathering of odds and ends by that auld wife will hae a powerful effect. My lord, ye ken, has promised to read the defence; now ye maun put into it a hypothetical story, wherein ye will relate, in a circumstantial manner, something like this tale of Knarl; and ye'll suppose a man who has been so spited by misfortune, meeting in a state of intoxication with some one that he had thought wronged him, and that a quarrel ensued; and when ye have set all this out to advantage with your best cunning, ye'll then take another turn, and describe the workings of the venom of resentment in the breast of his adversary; and with that art which ye know how to employ, ye'll represent that adversary yearning for revenge, and watching with great vigilance for an opportunity to satisfy his hatred—winding up with some supposed meeting by accident, under cloud of night, in a lonely forest, nobody near, nor eye to see, but only the stars of heaven. Do this, and we'll see what effect it has on Sir Hubert, who will no doubt be present at the trial; and by that we'll shape the line of our defence, and be regulated in the bringing forward of our evidence."

Blondell was not altogether satisfied with this irrelevant mode

of proceeding; but Wylie urged him so strongly, that before going to bed he altered the paper which he had previously prepared for the defence, and it was ready for Lord Sandysford to peruse in the morning.

The trial excited a great deal of interest, and a vast multitude was early assembled round the court-house. Among them the unhappy gipsy family stood near the entrance to the hall; and the crowd opened involuntarily as the judges and the high sheriff, with their officers and attendants, passed in state. The moment that the old woman saw them, she dropped on her knees; and the rest of the family following her example, knelt in a row by her side, and loudly clamoured to the heavens to send down justice.

The spectators were profoundly impressed by this spectacle, and made way with silence and solemnity for the unfortunate gipsies to retire from the spot. A few children who were in the crowd followed them, and stood round them in sympathetic compassion as they mournfully seated themselves on the steps of a door, awaiting the fate of their relations, who were in the mean time placed at the bar.

CHAPTER LV.

THE TRIAL.

At the trial, the Earl of Sandysford and Sir Hubert Mowbray were seated on the bench, and his lordship sat on the right of the judge who presided. When the indictment was read, the prisoners pleaded "Not Guilty;" and the son was proceeding with great vehemence to assert their innocence of the murder, while he again acknowledged that they had plundered the body. But upon a signal from our hero, he suddenly desisted and stood silent.

After a short statement of the case from the counsel for the crown, the examination of the evidence commenced. The post-

boys were asked the same questions which they had formerly answered before the coroner. Lord Sandysford's groom was also interrogated to the same facts; and it was clearly established that the younger prisoner was one of the two persons who had been scared from the body. Several other witnesses proved that they had found the watch and the trinkets of the deceased in the possession, and on the person, of the old man.

The case for the prosecution being thus closed, the spectators were convinced that the guilt was fully established, and the court also wore a portentous aspect to the unfortunate prisoners Sir Hubert Mowbray, who had evinced throughout the examination a troubled and eager solicitude, threw himself back in his seat, as if tired with some inordinate labour, and seemed relieved from the most intense anxiety.

After a short pause, the judge enquired what the prisoners had to urge in their defence; and Blondell replied for them, that they had prepared a short statement, which they hoped the judge would read to the jury. The paper was accordingly passed by him to Andrew, who had seated himself, as if by accident, under Lord Sandysford, and he gave it up to his lordship. The earl was a little agitated when he received it, but said to the judge, in giving it to him, that, as it seemed to be closely and cramply written, he would, with his permission, read it to the court.

The judge thanked his lordship for his politeness, and said aloud, that "Although the evidence adduced was really irresistible, yet that the prisoners, in some respects, might be considered fortunate in the accident of having their defence put into the hands of his noble friend, the Earl of Sandysford, by whom it would be read with an effect that could not have been anticipated, and listened to by all present with a degree of respectful attention, which, after what was proved in evidence, could scarcely have been expected."

At the conclusion of this address the earl rose. His elegant figure, and prepossessing countenance, were of themselves calculated to beget the most favourable disposition in his auditors, and this feeling was excited into a sentiment of reverence, by the solemnity of the occasion, and the charity of the office he had undertaken. Unaccustomed, however, to take a leading part in

so mixed and such a numerous assembly, there was a slight degree of diffidence in his manner; perhaps it might be owing to the consciousness of being a party to the benevolent artifice by which the paper had been placed in his hands. It, however, had the effect of engaging the affection, if we may use the term, of the spectators in his favour, adding, as it were, a touch of something that drew its essence from compassion, to the conciliatory influence of his personal appearance.

The paper began with a simple description of the outcast condition of the prisoners, stating, that had they consulted their own feelings they would have offered no defence, but allowed themselves to have been quietly conducted to the scaffold, not because they had committed any crime which merited a doom so dreadful, for they knew that neither the court nor the jury could do otherwise than believe them guilty.

"The evidence," said the defence, and the reader became pathetic, "is so strong, that we are unable to resist it—we were scared from the body of the murdered man—his property was found in our possession—what avails assertions of innocence against facts so stubborn? But we are innocent—and in the face of evidence that would convict the irreproachable judge himself before whom we are now arraigned, we declare ourselves free from the stain of this crime. Which, however, among you, has any respect for the declaration of two miserable vagrants, bred up to dishonesty, practised in deceit, and the natural termination of whose life, by almost all present, is considered as that which seems inevitably to await this poor despised old man, and the heir and partner of all his ignominy? My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, the law of this land presumes that every culprit placed at the bar is innocent till he has been proved guilty. But are we so treated? On the contrary, my Lord and Gentlemen, lay your hands upon your own hearts, and say to heaven, if you can, that you have not come to this trial with a general persuasion of our guilt, and in the investigation have not unconsciously construed the evidence against the friendless outcasts, rather than sought to find in it any extenuating circumstance. But why need we dwell on this—why contend against a fatality that cannot be resisted? Habit, education, yea, the very letter

of your law, the law by which you profess to give us justice, has taken from the vagrant gipsy all the common privileges of the subject, and pronounces him a criminal before he is even accused of any crime. Had we not stood in this original degradation before you—had we possessed, like the felons that are usually brought to this bar, the basis of any claim to be considered as innocent, then we should have entered courageously on our defence, and though we might not have succeeded against such evidence to demonstrate our perfect innocence, we should have made you, Gentlemen of the Jury, hesitate in your verdict, and even yourself, my lord, tremble, when obliged to pronounce the fatal sentence. In that case, we should have shown that all against us is but presumptive circumstances. We should have demanded of the counsel for the crown, to prove that the body was not stiff and cold when the servants of Lord Sandyford removed it from the road; for, my Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, we are prepared to prove that fact; and we would ask you—not you, but all—yea, the whole world—whether it is likely that two persons, who had hours before committed a murder on the highway, and under the cloud of night, would have exposed themselves to the hazard of detection, by going abroad in the morning to plunder their victim? The thing is incredible, and yet you must believe it, if you believe us guilty; for we shall show, by the witnesses for the prosecution, that they did find the body stiff and cold, at the very time when they detected us in the act of rifling it.

“My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury—You are to bear in mind, that could we have believed ourselves not previously considered by you as guilty, we would have shown that the deceased was seen alive on the preceding night, not far from the spot where his body was found. Is it not probable that the murder was committed soon after that time? And if we can prove that we were then at a considerable distance, we would ask you to say, whether the persons who saw the murdered man at that hour on that spot, are not more likely to have done the deed themselves, than the unfortunate men whom the presumptive evidence (for it is only presumptive) which you have heard, has prepared you to condemn? But you will think that the persons

alluded to are freed from the risks of such a charge, by the integrity and virtue of their character. Yes, my Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury, they are freed—no visible motive can be assigned to make it feasible that they were likely to commit such a crime; while the hereditary infamy and poverty of the gipsies constitute warrantry enough to punish them for any offence. But is infamy the child or the parent of vice? and is poverty always the mother of crimes? The shame that attaches to the outcast wanderer, is often but the extended visitation of ancestral sin—and in the unknown abysses of your own bosoms, have you never felt the dark gropings of hatred and revenge? Set the infamy that gipsies inherit from their parents aside—if your prejudices can be moved to do such an act of justice—and restore us to that equality which men placed in the perils of the law are justly entitled to claim and to expect, and much of that persuasion with which you have believed us guilty will at once pass away from your minds. Then think how many other incitements, as well as poverty, urge unhappy men to the commission of crimes, and you will not believe that poverty could alone be the instigator of this mysterious murder. Picture, for example, to yourselves two young men in the animation of youthful rivalry, their fortunes green and flourishing, and both in pursuit of the same mistress, with all that ardour which the energy of youth inspires. One of them is successful. Reflect on the mortification of the other—the grudge and the resentment which takes root in his bosom. Follow them in the progress of life—see the successful lover, flushed perhaps with his guilty victory, rushing deeper and deeper into pleasure, and finally sinking into ruin; while his adversary, perhaps disgusted by the failure of his love adventure, settles into a prudent, a calculating, and a worldly character. Carry your view further, and in the wreck of his rival's fortune, see him stepping forward with a malicious generosity, which humbles while it aids, and taking his enemy by the hand, amazing the world by his disinterested kindness. Then look into the mortified breast of the humiliated bankrupt, and contemplate the bitter feelings that a career of licentiousness has engendered, and which are darkly stirring and fomenting there. Is it to be supposed, that between such persons any

other sentiment can exist than the most implacable hatred, though the habitual prudence of the one, and some remaining regard to the estimation of the world in the other, may still impose restraints which keep their respective animosities at bay? But suppose that by some accident, in the course of years, they are brought together, immediately after some recent provocation on both sides, and in such a place, for example, and at such a time of night, as when this murder was committed. Suppose, also, that the malignant benefactor is attended by his servant, and the bankrupt is on foot—if, next morning, the bankrupt is found murdered near the spot where they met—and if it can be proved that his inveterate enemy, soon after they had passed each other, sent away the servant on a needless pretext, would not every man think, whatever was the character of the gentleman?—Look to Sir Hubert Mowbray."

Lord Sandford himself was startled at this abrupt apostrophe, which had been added after he had perused the defence before coming into court; and the alarmed emphasis with which he uttered it, produced an awful effect.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE TABLES TURNED.

THE words, "Look to Sir Hubert Mowbray," were written at the bottom of a page, and on turning over the leaf nothing was added. The judge enquired what it meant, and Blondell immediately said he did not understand it; that the words must have been inserted by some mistake unknown to him. They were, in fact, supplied by our hero secretly, for he anticipated this effect; he had also abstracted the remainder of the defence.

"Mr Blondell," said the judge, "unless you think fit, it is unnecessary to proceed further in this sort of defence; I would advise you to call what witnesses you intend to bring forward." The clear-sighted counsellor instantly acquiesced in this sug-

gestion; and the earl sat down, pondering on the singularity of the incident, while every eye in the court was turned towards Sir Hubert Mowbray.

When order was restored, (for the agitation which the abrupt apostrophe had produced lasted some time,) our hero was placed in the witness's box, where he related with singular brevity and clearness the whole of his adventure with the gipsies; but he was designedly not asked by Blondell respecting the card. Lord Sandysford sat in admiration of his self-command, and the quiet and unobtrusive distinctness of his answers; but was troubled at the omission of so important a fact. Doctor Saffron was then called, and proved the hour at which Wylie had applied for admission. The post-boys and Lord Sandysford's groom were successively again placed in the box, and clearly established what was asserted in the paper, that the body was stiff and cold.

The judge was so amazed at the turn which the examination was taking, that his hand shook as he took down the evidence. Suspicion darted from every eye on Sir Hubert; and several times it was observed that his lips became white, and a yellow suffusion overspread his countenance, but still he kept his place.

In this stage of the proceedings Blondell paused, and requested that the minutes of the examination before Sir Hubert, and of the coroner's inquest, should be read. It was done accordingly; but in Sir Hubert's notes, instead of our hero's name and address—the suspicion of the old gipsy woman was confirmed—another name and address had been substituted.

"Where is the card?" said Blondell.

"It has been somehow lost or mislaid," replied Sir Hubert with a faltering voice.

The judge animadverted on the carelessness of permitting such an accident to happen.

"It is of no consequence," said Blondell; and in a moment after he added, "but I find, my lord, that the card has not been lost. I crave, however, your lordship's attention, and that of the gentlemen of the jury, to the singular fact, that it does not contain the name and address which has been read from the record of the minutes."

The patched card was then handed up to the judge; who, in passing it to Sir Hubert, looked him sternly in the face. The baronet, however, still mastered his agitation sufficiently to deny that it was the card.

The prisoners, on hearing his denial, uttered a groan of rage, and an appalling murmur ran through the whole court. Blondell, however, with inflexible serenity, went on with his business, and merely said, "I am sorry to trouble the court; I should have questioned the witness Wylie as to this point; but, my lord, the omission was intentional."

"I can believe that, Mr Blondell," replied the judge emphatically. "Let Wylie be again called."

He was accordingly placed in the box, and not only swore to the fact of having given the card, but also that of the visit which he had received from the gipsy woman; and his evidence was confirmed as to the visit by the constable to whom Jacob had given her in charge, and who could not divine, till that moment, for what reason he had been summoned as a witness.

A sound of dread and wonder murmured in the court, and was succeeded by the most profound silence, when Jenkins, Sir Hubert's groom, was called. His master, the moment he mounted the box, hastily retired; and it was indeed time, for his answers to a few simple questions, calculated to elicit the circumstances which he had stated to our hero in the stable-yard of the inn, convinced every person present that the suspicion attached much more strongly to Sir Hubert than even to the gipsies, although, in reality, no direct circumstance was clearly brought home. But so susceptible had every mind been rendered by the curious train of reflection which the written defence had been designedly drawn to produce, that every thing in the groom's evidence told with the force of a fact.

At this crisis an agitated howl of horror suddenly rose from the crowd assembled around the court-house; the judge started from his seat; and the jury, as if actuated by some sublime impulse, proclaimed the gipsies innocent. In the same instant a hundred voices exclaimed, that Sir Hubert Mowbray, in a fit of distraction, had thrown himself from a window, and was killed on the spot.

The court immediately adjourned; but before the gipsies retired from the bar, Blondell took an opportunity of giving them, in the presence of his brethren, the money which the old woman had brought to him, in her simplicity, as a fee. The foundation of his fortune was indeed laid; for the judge spoke of his address and talents in terms of the highest admiration; the consequence of which was, that he was retained in almost every important cause; and although the impediment in his speech prevented him from ever becoming a popular pleader, he acquired great opulence as a chamber counsellor, and through life spoke of our hero as the original architect of his fortune.

On none, however, did the singular result of this important trial leave so deep an impression as on the Earl of Sandysford. His lordship saw the pervading sagacity of his favourite in the whole skilful management of the defence; and when they met in the inn, after returning from the court, instead of treating him with that wonted familiarity which proceeded from a sense of his own superiority, he addressed him with so much respect, that the change in his manner was assurance to Wylie of the ascendancy which he might now assume over even this accomplished and highly-endowed nobleman. Still, however, his original and indestructible simplicity, like the purity of the invulnerable diamond, underwent no alteration. He continued the same odd and whimsical being; and even while the earl was seriously applauding the generosity and effect with which he had exerted himself in behalf of the gipsies, he began to fidget about the room, and to spout out his peevish surprise, that they had not the manners to thank him. "No," said he, "that I care a peastune for the wind of their mouth; but I would just hae liket to have had a canny crack with the auld wife, anent their slights and cantrips; for when a' trades fail, my lord, I think I'll take to fortune-telling."

"And I know not wherefore that I would sooner consult," said the earl, in a gay tone than he had been hitherto using.

"Say ye sae, my lord? then lend me your loo, and ye shall be my first customer."

In the freedom of the moment, the earl laughingly held out his hand, which Andrew seized with avidity; and after looking

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at it in silence for about a minute, his feelings overcame him, and the earl started to find a tear fall in his palm.

"In the name of heaven, Wylie, what's the meaning of this?"

Andrew dropped the hand, and retired to a distance till his emotion had subsided. When coming again forward, he said, "My lord, why will ye prohibit me from being of any use to you in that concern which lies nearest your heart? This day I have been an instrument in the hand of Providence to redd the ravelled skein of the poor gipsies, to whom I was, in a manner, under no obligation; but to you, who under heaven have been my great benefactor, I am still but as barren sand. The complexion of the gipsies' guilt was as black as my leddy's; your lordship has seen it made as pure as the driven snow. Why will you sit down in your delusion, and wear out the blithe days of life like an owl in the desert? Od, my lord, it's a fool trick; and ye maun thole wi' me till I tell you what I have discovered."

The earl was disconcerted; but, seating himself in a chair, listened while our hero related what he had heard from Doctor Brown respecting the Italian girl and the child; at the conclusion of which he rose, and immediately left the room. Andrew would have stopped him, and indeed stepped forward to take him by the coat; but his lordship, with a hurried hand and an agitated look, shook him as it were away.

CHAPTER LVII.

PARTY-SPIRIT

WE must now call the attention of our readers to a series of circumstances that flowed in another channel, but which at this point fall into the main stream of Wylie's story. Viscount Riversdale, the son of the Marquis of Avonside, and brother to Lady Sandysford, had been several years abroad, a voluntary exile, for reasons which neither his father nor friends were able

to fathom. His conduct, indeed, like that of his more accomplished brother-in-law the earl, was to them an inexplicable enigma; but instead of rushing like him into a career of dissipation and extravagance, he shrunk out of society, and abandoned himself to despondency and solitude. His health was naturally delicate, and a morbid sensibility, the symptom either of genius or of weakness, constituted the principal feature of his character.

About the time he left college, the aurora borealis of the French Revolution began to brighten in the political horizon—a morning which so many young and generous bosoms, exalted by the inspiring legends of Greek and Roman virtue, considered as the beginning of a new day to the moral world, and the commencement of the millennium predicted by the oracles of holy writ. Lord Riversdale was among the number of those who devoutly worshipped the rising daystar. But Sandysford, who was then one of his most intimate friends, although he partook of the same admiration, was enabled, by the possession of a more commanding and perspicacious genius, to discover the meteoric splendour of the phenomenon: and he not only occasionally laughed at the glorious anticipations of Riversdale, but sometimes insinuated that his ardour would cool, and that he would yet be found among the champions of ancient institutions. This raillery was but the playful ridicule of a superior mind, amused with the raptures of a fond enthusiasm; and it was expressed in terms which never gave offence, though it often provoked the most vehement declarations of constancy to the cause of the new-born liberty.

At the time of the earl's marriage, Lord Riversdale was returned to parliament, and took up his residence in town with the marquis, his father. According to the hereditary politics and party connexions of the old peer, his lordship was introduced to many of the most distinguished members of both houses, who had adopted the opinions and views of Mr Burke; and it never occurred to his ingenuous mind, that the courtesies of social intercourse could be supposed to deteriorate the integrity of his public principles. Sandysford, however, warned him to the contrary; but a false pride made him glory in the ordeal to which

he was subjected, and even to cultivate a greater degree of intimacy with some of the leading members of the ministerial party, than he would otherwise perhaps have done. Along with his father, he accepted invitation after invitation from the adversaries, as he considered them, of freedom; but still he assured his political friends, that he was invulnerable to the blandishments of power.

On the day when parliament assembled for the first time after his election, he went with his father to the house. The marquis had occasion to call on the minister, and they met him in Downing Street. Without the slightest consideration on either side, the minister was invited to accept a seat in their carriage; and on being set down at the entrance to the House of Commons, in ascending the stairs he took hold of Riversdale by the arm, and they walked in together. This was observed by his lordship's friends in the house, and the most corrupt construction was put upon the incident; for they regarded it as the realization of a junction, which they had begun to suspect would be the result of the intercourse which he had so unnecessarily cultivated.

The infirm health of Riversdale made him suffer from the extreme heat of the crowded house, and he retired early, with the intention, however, of returning; but the division on the address took place before he came back, and this—the effect solely of constitutional infirmity—was attributed to political apostasy.

The same night it was resolved, in the acrimonious spirit of that period, by those to whom he had in principle allied himself, that they should sever themselves from all communion with him. This rash determination, taken without enquiry, was as little honourable to them as it was derogatory to him; but the consequences smote him like the influence of a malignant spell. And when Lord Sandford explained to him the cause of the altered behaviour of his political associates, he was so mortified at the thought of being considered so weak in virtue, and so flexible in principle, that he abruptly quitted London, and gave up his seat in the House of Commons. The humiliating idea preyed upon his spirits, and he fell into a low and querulous misanthropy, which at last assumed the character of actual disease. Advised

by his physicians to travel, he went abroad; and during the interval which elapsed between the first session of parliament, after Lord Sandford's marriage, and the epoch at which we are now arrived in our story, he had continued wandering over the continent, without finding any relief from the anguish of his mortified sensibility.

His sequestration from public life was lamented by his father as one of the severest misfortunes; for he had formed high, perhaps inordinate, expectations from the abilities of Riversdale. Such, indeed, was the paternal partiality of the marquis, that he could patiently endure to hear him expatiate on those hopes and prospects of perpetual peace and felicity, which the mob of Paris were supposed to be then unfolding to man, persuaded that his utopian reveries, like the fumes of the fermenting vintage, which pass off as the juice resolves itself into the bright and generous wine, would evaporate with the warmth and enthusiasm of youth.

And he often entreated him to return home, and take what side he pleased in politics. "Let no filial sentiment of deference to me," said his lordship, "have any effect on the free exercise of your judgment; for whatever difference may at present exist between our political principles, I know that you will in time see the true interests of your country in the same light that I do, and, like me, exert your best talents to uphold and promote them; therefore, I again repeat, Come home, and come free. All I desire is, to see you qualifying yourself in parliament to take that part in the great affairs of the kingdom which, I am proud to say, our ancestors have, for so many ages, sustained with such renown."

Riversdale, however, was deaf to all these entreaties; but a letter from his sister, written soon after she had taken up her abode at Bretonsfield Castle, produced the desired event. She informed him of all the circumstances which we have so faithfully described, and requested him to come to her; for the thought of living under the evil opinion of the world, and in the contempt of her husband, was become too much for her long to endure. The moment that he received this disconsolate and anxious letter he returned to England, and, on his arrival, went

at once to Chastington Hall; for although Lord Sandyford shared in that aimless resentment, which the sense of mortification made him feel against all his early associates, he still entertained a profound respect for the honour and principles of his lordship, and was eager, before seeing either his sister or father, to obtain from him some account of the circumstances which had involved the countess in such difficulties and distress. But when he reached the Hall, the earl had set out to attend the trial of the gipsies, whither he resolved to follow him. Being, however, as we have mentioned, in delicate health, he travelled slower, and in consequence did not arrive till some time after the acquittal.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A JOURNEY.

THE landlord had assisted Lord Riversdale to alight from the post-chaise in which he travelled, and on his asking for the Earl of Sandyford, ushered him into the room where our hero was still standing, agitated with sympathy for the mental anguish which his patron was so evidently suffering.

Wylie, on Lord Riversdale's being announced, instantly recognized the brother of Lady Sandyford; for although he had never seen him, he was acquainted with his title and relationship, and an indescribable feeling of alarm at the moment, made him dart towards the pale and querulous invalid a shrewd and distrustful glance.

"I was told that my Lord Sandyford was here," said Riversdale enquiringly, at the same time moving round to retire.

"He has just stepped out," replied our hero. I expect him back—please take a seat till he comes." He then added, somewhat diffidently, "Perhaps I ought to let him know that it is your lordship who has called."

Riversdale was struck with the tone in which this was said,

and, sharply inspecting Wylie with his bright and hectical eye, said—

“You are in his lordship’s confidence, I presume, from supposing that it may be necessary to give him time to reflect whether he ought to see me?”

Our hero, at these words, walked up close to his lordship, and stopping with an air of resolution and firmness, said to him calmly, but with a sustained voice, “The earl is my friend and benefactor, and I have just been speaking to him, maybe on that account, a thought ower freely; and therefore, if ye’ll be advised by me, ye’ll no seek to see him till we learn the upshot of my exhortation, which was all concerning the calamitous state of that poor leddy, your lordship’s sister.”

“Who are you?” exclaimed Riversdale, surprised at such freedom.

“A friend!” replied Andrew coolly, to the sharp accent in which this question was peevishly expressed; and then he added briskly, “Indeed, my lord, ye must submit in this matter to be ruled by me; for the earl has of late grown a perfect spunky, and flies off at the head like a bottle of champagne, whenever ony body speaks to him of my leddy.”

Lord Riversdale retired several paces, and took a chair, looking in amazement at the familiar and uncouth phenomenon before him. Andrew followed him; and also took a seat near him, saying, “My lord, I redd ye hearken to what I am saying. It has just come into my head, that it would be a great thing for our friends, if you and me, before fashing the earl ony mair at this present time, could have a solid crack and confable with the countess, in yon old warlock tower, where she’s sitting like a howlet. What say ye till’t?”

“This is the most extraordinary adventure I ever met with,” said Riversdale. “There must be some singular cause for a person of your appearance”——

“What’s the matter with my appearance?” cried Andrew impatiently; “and what has it to do with prudence and truth? Your leddy sister, my lord, or I’m far wrang, will be very glad to see me with you. In thruth, we’ll just have to come away, for ye’re ower thin-skinned to be left wi’ ane so short in the

temper as the earl is at this time. There's ill blood enough among you already."

"I do not think," replied the viscount, half smiling, "that there is, however, any great reason to apprehend a quarrel between Sandyford and me—we know each other too well."

"All that's very true," said Andrew; "but I'll no trust you, and for this plain reason—his lordship's no willing to do your sister justice. Noo, if ye're a man of spirit, as ye're a nobleman, what can come out of such a case but swords out of their sheaths?"

"It is impossible that Sandyford can ever act so basely!" exclaimed Riversdale, still more and more astonished.

"Whether it be possible or no," replied our hero, "I'll no take it upon me to predicate; but that it's true, is a certain fact."

"Then it is the more necessary that I should instantly see him," cried the viscount, trembling with emotion, and rising hastily.

"Hooly, hooly," said Andrew, laying his hand on his lordship's arm, and gently pressing him again into his chair. "Lord-sake, but ye're a tap o' tow! Sit down, and listen with discretion to what I would say. The devil's hyte among the folk."

Lord Riversdale resumed his seat, and our hero explained to him the system of self-affliction which the earl had seemingly adopted, and described the circumstances which had come to his knowledge respecting the child, and the interviews between the countess and Ferrers.

"From all this, my lord, ye see there's still a mist hanging about her leddyship; and, considering the humour my lord's in, I really think we had better see her anent the same."

Riversdale was struck with the sense that shone through the account which our hero gave of the earl's situation and feelings, and could not but acknowledge that there was much which Lady Sandyford could alone explain.

After some further conversation on the subject, he therefore agreed that they should immediately set out for Bretonsbeild Castle, "and leave the earl," as Andrew said "to his own medi-

tations; for we'll either make a spoon or spoil a horn by the journey, and the sooner the job's done the better."

A chaise was accordingly ordered, and before Lord Sandyford was informed of his brother-in-law's arrival, they were far on the road.

During the journey, however, the viscount, who had been fatigued by his previous travelling, and his health being delicate and infirm, before they were halfway to the castle, complained so much, that Wylie advised him to stop at an inn for the night; and this suggestion being adopted, our hero went forward alone to the countess.

CHAPTER LIX.

DISCOVERIES.

In the course of about half an hour after Lord Riversdale and Wylie had set out for Bretonsbeild Castle, the earl returned to the room where he had left the latter, and found Blondell there alone. Without adverting to our hero's absence, his lordship began to speak of the trial, and to express his admiration of the skill and discernment with which the defence had been conducted.

"The sagacity of Mr Wylie," replied the barrister, "appears to me indeed still more and more surprising; for since the court adjourned, several gentlemen who were present at the trial have come to me, and thrown such light on the instigating motives of Sir Hubert Mowbray, that fills me with awe and astonishment. The information of the old woman, considering her means of acquiring it, and the short time she had to make the enquiry, was truly wonderful; but the manner in which Mr Wylie conceived it might be rendered so available to the defence, seems to have been a providential inspiration."

"What are the facts that have since come to your knowledge?" said the earl.

"In themselves," replied Blondell, "they are trivial; but in connexion with such a character as that of Sir Hubert—persevering, implacable, and proud—they are tremendous and appalling. It now appears that, on the day preceding the murder, Knarl and the baronet met at Kidderborough races, beyond the forest. Among other strangers who happened to be there, were several gentlemen who had known Knarl in his better days; and who, seeing him in the crowd at the bottom of the stand, where they had so often before met him on equal terms, from a feeling of old companionship, invited him to come up among them. He had not, however, been long in the stand till he was recognised by Sir Hubert, who reddened, as it was remarked, with indignation at his supposed presumption, and remonstrated with the steward of the races against the impropriety of allowing a person of his condition and character to be seen among them. Knarl did not hear what passed; but when he received a hint from one of his friends that some objection was made to his appearance on the stand, he justly attributed the request that he should leave the place, to the unappeasable resentment of his old adversary. Nothing more, however, then took place. Knarl, on quitting the stand, retired from the race-ground."

"What you say is certainly impressive," observed Lord Sandysford; "but the inference I should draw from it would tend to persuade me that a quarrel probably took place; and that, after all, Knarl may have been slain by Sir Hubert in self-defence."

"True, my lord," said Blondell, "but other things have come out. The expulsion from the race-stand was a link wanting in the old woman's discoveries. It has now been ascertained that Knarl, after quitting the race-course, went to a public-house, where he sat sullenly indulging in solitary intemperance till he was quite intoxicated. Sir Hubert, after the race was over, dined with the stewards and a large party of gentlemen. While they were at dinner Knarl left Kidderborough alone on foot, and during the thunder-storm took refuge in a shed, where several other persons who had been at the races were standing for shelter. Here the information of the old gipsy again comes to bear; for it was from some of those whom Knarl joined in the shed that she gathered her account of their renewed enmity."

"And what passed?" said the earl eagerly, interested by the narrative.

"While the storm was still raging, Sir Hubert, attended by his groom, came up to the shed, and, dismounting, went also in for shelter—where he had not long been when Knarl recognized him, and taunted him in terms of great bitterness, accused him of a systematic determination to grind him to ruin, and upbraided him with the subtle vengeance of that friendship with which he had deceived the rest of the world."

"How did Sir Hubert endure this?" enquired Lord Sandford with agitation.

"He remained perfectly silent, till the infatuated Knarl, losing all self-command, threatened to lay before the world a history of their intercourse, the original motives of Sir Hubert's hatred, and the malignancy of the favours by which, after destroying him in the opinion of the world, he had sunk him for ever into the more horrible perdition of his own opinion."

"And what was the effect of all this?" exclaimed the earl.

"It was noticed by the glare of the lightning," replied Blondell, "that Sir Hubert, who was standing with his hands clasped over his heart, and breathing shortly, scowled with his eyes turned askance towards Knarl. 'His look,' said the person who told me, 'though seen but for a moment, I shall never forget.'"

"I perceive," said his lordship, "that you infer he at that time meditated the murder."

"Even so—and I am confirmed in this opinion," was Blondell's answer, "by the circumstance, that Sir Hubert abruptly called Jenkins the groom, who, it appears, was standing with the horses at some distance, and although the rain was then falling in torrents, immediately mounted, and returned to Kidderborough, professedly for the night, but certainly, it would seem, with no such intention; for when Sir Hubert got back to the inn, he ordered his servant to keep the horses still saddled. This I have now learned from Jenkins himself—and as soon as the storm abated, they resumed their journey homeward, and rode with unusual speed till they reached the skirts of the forest. On entering the forest, Sir Hubert slackened his haste, and began to speak of his intention of going next day to Sir Thomas Fow-

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"I know not why it is," said the earl, "that we should feel satisfied at hearing guilt so clearly established. But what has become of Wylie?" and his lordship immediately rung the bell. It happened to be answered by one of his own servants, who, not aware of Lord Riversdale's arrival, but having seen our hero embark with him in the carriage for Bretonsbeild Castle, said, on being requested by his lordship to enquire for Mr Wylie, "that he had left the town with a strange gentleman in a post-chaise."

Lord Sandysford was troubled at this information; he was sensible of having rudely quitted Wylie in the agitation of the moment, and uneasy lest he should have offended his sensibility. Blondell seeing him disturbed, immediately retired, and his lordship, after pacing the room thoughtfully, ordered his carriage, and returned to Chastington Hall, leaving a note for Andrew, earnestly requesting him to follow him there as soon as possible.

CHAPTER LX.

A VISIT.

THE evening was far advanced before Wylie reached the Castle; and when he rang the bell at the gate, the countess was seated at her solitary tea-table. On hearing his well-known

and familiar voice in the passage, as he was coming along in jocular conversation with Flounce, she rose and opened the door to receive him.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr Wylie!" she exclaimed, as she took him by both the hands, with a cordiality very different from the measured urbanity of her former politeness. He was not prepared for the friendliness of this freedom, and at the first was a little embarrassed; nor was he insensible to a feeling allied to sorrow, when, instead of the splendid woman whom he had been accustomed to see adorned and surrounded with the brilliant ensigns of gayety and fashion, he beheld her pale, and dressed with extreme simplicity.

The countess herself placed a chair for him near her own, at the tea-table; and before he had time to address her, said, "I presume you have been at Chastington Hall?" and her accents faltered as she added, "I hope you have left my lord well?"

Andrew replied drolling, but with a look which the countess perfectly understood, "As to his being weel, that's a thing I canna undertake to swear to; but for a sign of his condition, I would say to your leddyship, ony harl of health he has is aye about meal-time. But, my leddy, this is an unco awesome house for you to live in. I'm no surprised that ye should be so fain to see a gay gallant like me coming on a visitation. Ah! ye would need to make mickle o' your visiters, or they'll no stay lang; for there's but little mirth where the only spring that's played is by the wind fifeing on the keyhole. I see your leddyship is surprised at my coming, and ye dinna think I am here without an errand."

The countess sighed, and made no reply, although Andrew paused, as if he expected she would. He then resumed, "Surely, my leddy, this gait of making yourself a nun is no what might have been hoped from a woman of your sense, and at your time of life."

"I have not renounced the world," said the countess; "I am only waiting here" — And she paused confused, conscious that the ambiguity of her expressions was liable to be misinterpreted.

"Waiting?" said our hero eagerly; "for what are you waiting?"

"Do not misunderstand me," she cried hastily. "I am only waiting to see what is to be the result of this strange state into which I have been thrown. I feel myself entangled in a net, from which I cannot extricate myself. My fate is ravelled with circumstances beyond my control. The world may believe me worthy of the abandonment that I suffer—the fruit of one trifling indiscretion. Conscious of my innocence, and confident that, sooner or later, I shall be indemnified for what I now endure, I wait patiently the natural development of the mystery with which I am involved."

"By the indiscretion, your leddyship means, I suppose, following the rash counsel of that diplomatical body, my lord marquiss, your father?"

"Your supposition is just. I have no other error of conduct towards my husband, for which I can be blamed with any severity."

"Then, if your leddyship is sensible of that fault, what for will ye no try to amend it? If ye ran awa' from your gudeman in a pet, surely, whenever ye came to your senses, you ought to have gone back to him, wi' a napkin at your e'e, an' it had only been a sham for decency."

"Why, Mr Wylie," said the countess, smiling at the figure he had employed, "I think, when I left my father and went to Elderbower to the dowager, I did nearly as much as in reason could be expected from a woman that thought herself but half in the wrong."

"As to that I'll say nothing; but ye know that women—the present company, of course, excepted—are kittle cattle to deal with."

"Mr Wylie, this conversation is becoming painful to me. I am so circumstanced that I know not what to do. If I could see my way clearly, I should require no prompting." The countess, after a pause of about a minute, added, "I will deal frankly with you; although I do, as a woman, think, that if Sandyford wished for a reconciliation, he ought, as a man, to come to me himself. It would be an act of grace and love, and I would ever esteem it as such. Yet, as a wife, I will stand on no such etiquette. Does he desire to live with me again? Say

so, and I will instantly go to him, and endeavour to forget all the past, and to devote my life to promote his happiness."

Andrew was thunderstruck; he found himself in a dilemma that he had never imagined possible. He had formed no adequate conception of the united strength and magnanimity of her ladyship's character; and exclaimed, "My lord is a fool, and no sensible of his mercies, nor the value of the pearl he casts away!"

The countess smiled at this warmth; and, pleased with the compliment, said, "Come, come, my friend, let us drop the subject. I see how it is—I know Sandysford better than you do—I have discovered his nature more by reflection since we parted, than by experience when we were man and wife. He will rather continue, against his conscience, and even inclinations, in error, than be, as he deems it, so weak as to acknowledge he has acted wrong. I cannot go to him unless he wishes it."

"I did not say," exclaimed our hero, glad to catch at this expression, "that he does not wish it. On the contrary, I do with sincerity believe, that nothing on earth would give him more pleasure than the sight of your ladyship at Chastington Hall. But"—and he paused.

Her ladyship saw him confused and diffident, the consequence, at that moment, of his reluctance to advert to the affair of Ferrers. In fact, he was more satisfied by her sentiments and manner, than he could have been by any explanation; and, after a momentary pause, in which he decided to say nothing on that subject, he resumed in a lively key, "But no to talk about such melancholious concerns, I have brought blithe news. Your ladyship's brother's come home, and will be here betimes the morn's morning. Poor lad, he's no very strong, and unco easily fashed; so I left him on the road to come on at his leisure." He then explained to her more circumstantially how they had accidentally met, and the motives which induced him to keep him from seeing Lord Sandysford.

The countess, who had listened calmly to the whole narrative, said, with an accent that completely for a moment disconcerted our hero, "Why should you have supposed that there was any likelihood of the two quarrelling? Surely there is nothing in my case to provoke a quarrel."

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"I'm no sure of that," said Wylie unguardedly. "In a word, my leddy, the earl is as dure as a door-nail, and winna listen even to the vindication of your leddyship's character."

The countess looked for a moment wildly; but a few tears coming to her relief, she said, "I did not think that Sandyford cared so little for me."

The tone of pathetic dejection in which this was uttered, pierced the heart of Wylie. He perceived the error he had committed, or rather the erroneous interpretation which the countess had given to his words; and eager to set her right, said, "I doubt, my leddy, it comes from another cause. He cares more for you than he will allow either himself or any other body to think; and I fancy that his contrariness is altogether of some misleart cranium about your caring nothing for him. However, we'll see what's to be said on this head the morn, when your leddyship's brother comes. But it would save baith him and me a world of trouble, if you would just put your heel in your neck, and tumble at ance ouer to Chastington Hall, and come to a right understanding with your gudeman himself, without the interloping of any other friends."

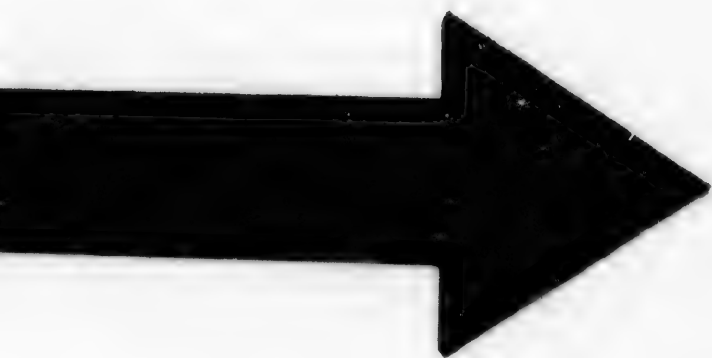
The countess smiled, and, during the remainder of the evening, turned the conversation into a lighter strain, chiefly relative to the state of her friends in town.

CHAPTER LXI.

MAGNANIMITY

THE following morning was grey and lowering, and when Lord Riversdale approached Bretonsbeild Castle, which he had never before seen, the aspect of its old magnificence, and the walls and towers, hoary with the lichens of antiquity, and darkened with the shadow of past time, impressed his imagination, and awakened associations of the most solemn and affecting kind. The reveries of his early enthusiasm had long passed away, and





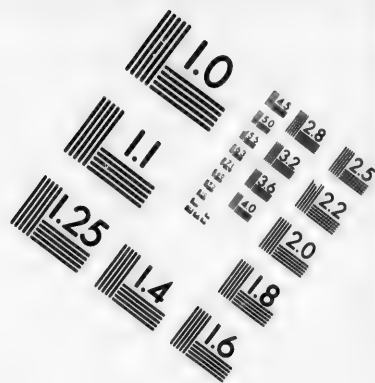
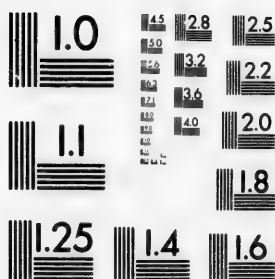
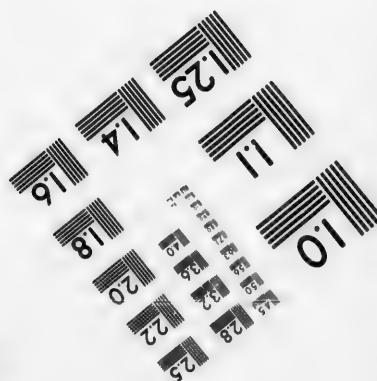
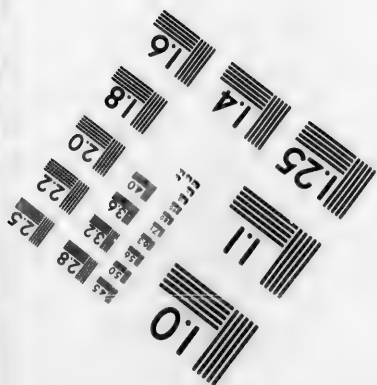


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the horrors of that anarchy, which, under the name of Freedom, committed such crimes for the personal aggrandizement of a few intrepid adventurers, had produced the change that Lord Sandysford had predicted, and taught him to cling with filial love and admiration to the institutions of his native land. It seemed to him as the castle rose before him, over the mists which floated along the surface of the downs, and which gave to it the appearance of some majestical edifice constructed by necromancy in the clouds, that it was a superb type of that vast and venerable moral fabric, which the wisdom, the achievements, and the virtues of ages have reared in this country; and he felt, as it were, rebuked by the genius of England, for having so long, from peevish motives of resentment, neglected to perform his proper part in those great controversies, which have for their object the perpetual renovation of the pile.

When he reached the gate, he was informed that our hero was abroad walking, and that the countess had not then made her appearance. He was, in consequence, shown into the breakfast-parlour, where he sat for some time alone, ruminating on the feelings we have described, and tenderly affected towards his sister, whom he had left the pride of beauty and the ornament of fashion, but had returned to seek in a seclusion and solitude, where every object indicated neglect, oblivion, and decay. These reflections gave a colouring of melancholy to his mind; and instead of that peevish sensibility which had rendered him almost unfit for social intercourse, he became mild and compassionate, and was moved into a sad but pleasing gentleness, that qualified him to listen with indulgence and pity to any narration of error or of sorrow. Accordingly, when, on being informed of his arrival, the countess hastened to embrace him, he received her with a warmth of affection that was delightful to himself, and she was so much affected by his emotion and sympathy, that she wept profusely on his shoulder.

"Hey!" cried Wylie, who entered at the moment, and perceiving how much they were affected, was anxious to divert their attention, "is my lord on wing already?"

"What do you mean?" cried Riversdale, disengaging himself from his sister.

"O, naething at all!" replied Andrew. "But it's no the use and wont of welcoming, to be playactoring in sic a tragical fashion. In trouth, my leddy and my lord, it will not do, considering the job we hae in hand, to be singing, 'Waly, waly, up yon bank, and waly, waly, down yon brae,' like Lady Bothwell, when her lord had left her. We live in times when tears are gone greatly out of fashion; maybe love and affection do na burn the brighter for a' that. Howsever, we should conform, and therefore I take it upon me to inhibit you from a' sort of opera-like antics, till we hae come to a right understanding wi' the breakfast-table. For I'm of a serious opinion that a weel-boiled egg, in a raw cold morning like this, is worth mair than a pint-stoup of salt tears, or a piper's bag of sighs and sobbing."

This whimsical address had the effect intended, and after a few other light and gay expressions, partly allusive to the object of the meeting, the party sat down to breakfast, with a degree of cheerfulness scarcely to have been expected from the impassioned anguish with which the countess and her brother had embraced.

"Weel, my leddy," said Andrew, when they had finished breakfast, and retired to her favourite room in the octagon tower, "I hae been thinking all night about you, and that whirligig, my Lord Sandymford, and I can mak nothing of your case but this—you would fain go back to him, and he wishes you would come, but he has his doubts."

"Doubts!" exclaimed the countess with agitation, and she added, with a sigh, "I cannot remove them."

She then recounted with a composed, but impressive voice, the whole circumstances relative to the child and to Ferrers, and entered into a very circumstantial explanation with her brother, respecting the pertinacious attentions of the maniac.

"It's a pity," said Lord Riversdale to the countess, "that Lord Sandymford cannot hear you report this—his candour would, without further investigation, be satisfied."

"But I fear," replied her ladyship, "that he cares little whether I am innocent or guilty."

"The deevil's in this world!" exclaimed Andrew, "if folk must suffer wrong without the hope of redress."

"I should think," said Riversdale pensively, "that were Sandyford once convinced of the fallacious appearance that has wrecked the happiness of you both, he would not scruple to restore you to his affections."

"As for convincing," said her ladyship, "that cannot be difficult. More than twenty witnesses can prove all that I have stated about Ferrers; and it was on that account, Riversdale, I requested you to come to England. I wish you to investigate the whole business thoroughly, and lay the result before my husband; not, however, in the hope that it will induce him to make any change in the determination he has taken; for long, long before the fatal paragraph, his heart was turned against me."

"Not his heart," said Andrew quietly, "only his head. I dinna think he's very sound in the judgment about your leddyship."

"Ah, Wylie!" exclaimed the countess, "do not call his judgment in question, for my own feelings bear testimony to its rectitude and discernment. I wonder he endured me so long."

The Siddonian majesty and pathos in which this was said, made our hero thrill with admiration and awe; while Lord Riversdale, unable to suppress his emotion, rose, and walking to one of the windows, stood for some time looking out, deeply agitated. He was, however, the first to break silence.

"Augusta," said he, "I will see Sandyford. It is impossible that he can suffer such immolation. I once knew him—and he must, indeed, be deplorably fallen from his original brightness, if he can be insensible to the grief which dictates such a sentiment."

The countess looked at her brother calmly for about the space of a minute, and then said, "Riversdale, I thought you knew me better. But no—for till lately I knew not myself. I will never be received by Sandyford in compassion—mark that—never be an object of his pity—no, not even of his generosity. I will take nothing less than his love—not that I say it is mine of right, but because I would now deserve it."

And in saying these words she immediately quitted the room, leaving her brother at once perplexed and surprised.

"Weel, I think, my lord," said our hero, "was ever twa sic deevil's buckies cleckit, to fash simple folk, like you and me, as this mighty madam and her flea-luggit lord? Odsake, if it werena for ae thing mair than anither, I would grip the twa by the cuff of the neck, and haud their noses to the grindstane—they deserve no mercy! But, my lord, the sorrow's in them or they get the better o' me. We'll e'en awa' to Chastington Hall, and see what Birky, or Belzebub, or whatever ye like to ca' that thrawn gude-brother o' your's, has to say till't; for I'll no let them ding me, noo that my heart's set to mak them happy, in spite o' their teeth."

"You are an incomprehensible being," replied Lord Riversdale, "and I feel the force of your good sense constraining me to act, where delicacy, although it is my sister's case, almost makes me shrink from any further proceeding."

"Poo! what's delicacy, my lord," exclaimed Andrew laughing, "but a bashful missy sort o' thing? I hae nae broo o' sic havers when I'm in earnest; so we'll just take back the chaise your lordship came hither in, and set off to Chastington without ony more parley about the matter."

"I doubt," said Riversdale, "my health will not allow me to travel either so fast or so far."

"Noo, that comes of your delicates," cried Andrew. "If ye hadna been nursing your hypochondriacs to make them thrive, ye would never hae thought about the travel or the road. Odsake, my lord, if ye're long in my hands, I'll put mair smeddum in you! So just come away at ance, and leave the countess to play at the chucks with her thimble, a bawbee, and a tamarrind stane, till we come back. Indeed, my lord, ye maun gae wi' me, for I'm playing the truant ower lang; and if Mr Veitun didna think I was on some business of Lord Sandysford's, I wouldna be surprised if he gave me a loofy when I gaed hame."

The impetuosity of Andrew succeeded, and they were, in the course of a few minutes, on the road to Chastington Hall.

CHAPTER LXII.

FORTUNE-TELLING.

AFTER the trial, the gipsies, who had so abruptly left the town, proceeded straight towards Chastington, whither they had learned our hero was expected to return with the earl; and having encamped under the park-wall, they gleaned from among the woodmen and labourers something of the situation of Lord and Lady Sandysford, and of the familiarity with which Wylie was treated by his lordship. The principal motive of this journey was, doubtless, dictated by gratitude, in order to offer their thanks, in a more formal manner than they could well do in the town where they were so much objects of interest.

That there are persons in the world who not only pretend to possess, but believe they actually do possess supernatural discernment, and also a very numerous multitude, of all degrees and ages, who give them full credit, cannot be denied. Far, therefore, be it from us to encourage any scepticism to the prejudice of a faith so venerable; especially as it was certain that our old gipsy woman had the most perfect confidence in her own oracular powers.

On the morning after the trial she was lingering about the portal of the hall, when the earl came out, and she immediately addressed him. "We have come," said she, "to thank you and the clear spirit in the small tabernacle for the salvation we enjoy. You have fee'd us, by kindness, to do your bidding, wheresoever the task may lie. Is there aught wherein our hands may work, or our spirits toil, or our skill serve, or our good-will aid? Speak, and give us pleasure!" And she paused abruptly, and looked steadily in his lordship's face.

"Why do you look so at me?" exclaimed the earl surprised, and in some degree offended.

"There's a wish in your heart, my lord," was the reply, "that you hide from yourself—a vision in your dreams, my lord, that you banish on waking."

The frame of mind in which his lordship was at the time, and

the tinge of melancholy with which his reflections had for several months been embued, made him peculiarly susceptible to fanciful impressions, and he felt something akin to dread at this singular apostrophe. The sharp-sighted gipsy perceived the influence of her crafty mysticism, and spoke, in a low and confiding accent, to the following effect:—"There are times and seasons when the stars above favour intents below, when the moon searches the blood, and the planets point, with their fingers of light, to the progeny of coming time. In this hour their benign influences are upon me; and would ye read a page in the book of destiny, I can unclasp the volume. Have faith in me when the spirit of oracles is upon me; when it departs, you will then ask my wisdom in vain."

The earl endeavoured to smile at this rhapsody, while he trembled at the prophetic energy of the sybil, and at her request held out his hand.

"This palm is empty," said the old woman.

The earl laughed, and put half-a-crown into it from his pocket.

The old woman flung the money with contempt away, and added, with tremendous solemnity—"That palm is empty, and yearns to press its fellow in kindness. What do I see?"

"I hope no evil!" said the earl, thrown off his guard.

"I thought," said the old woman calmly, "that I had seen the mark of a broken wedding-ring. That would betoken death; but I am mistaken, the sign shows only"—and she paused.

"Why do you hesitate?" said Lord Sandysford, deeply and strangely affected.

"The lamp of our skill," replied the gipsy, "burns but dimly—all things are not seen as we would see them. But if I might speak without offence"—

"Certainly," said the earl.

The sorceress then looked at him severely, and said, "I speak with spirits, and yours communes with mine. The wedding-ring I saw is not broken—you but wilfully hide a part within your own flesh, causing to yourself suffering and sorrow."

The old woman then broke out with the energy of the Pythia, and predicted, in a long rhapsody of meaningless images, an

endless life of conjugal bliss to his lordship, which had the effect of recovering him from the brief influence of the superstitious sentiments she had inspired; but although he laughed at her predictions, his mind retained the colouring, and he returned into the house, after liberally rewarding her, thoughtful and uneasy, under a mingled charm of hope and apprehension, incredulity and faith.

In the mean time our hero and Lord Riversdale were on their way from Bretonsbeild Castle to Chastington. They reached the Sandyford-Arms, at the park gate, just as the old woman was returning from her interview with the earl. Andrew immediately called to the post-boys to stop; saying, in the same breath to the viscount, "That auld wife is another Witch of Endor, or a Maggy Lang; I wonder what she can have been doing at the Hall. Heys, lucky!" he then exclaimed, addressing himself to her.

The gipsy came up instantly to the carriage-window, and with her characteristic rodomontade, began, much in the same style as she had addressed Lord Sandyford, to proffer the services of herself and all her tribe.

"Maybe," said our hero, "I shall have a bit job by-and-by in your way, when I have hens and cocks, or silver spoons, that can be stolen. But what have ye been doing with my lord?"

"I have read his fortune," was the emphatic reply.

"Ay, a wheen lees, nae dout—and what said ye?" cried Andrew.

Lord Riversdale sat surprised at their conversation, and the wild and haggard appearance of the old woman, as she thus replied: "I saw his empty palm, and his wedding-ring, that is not broken, but only hidden in the throbbing flesh—a cloud is around him, but it is not night—the summer of his days is yet to come, and along the avenue of future years, when he lies down to sleep on his mother's bosom, I beheld the rose of beauty and the oak of manhood bend their blooming and green heads in honour over him."

"Awa, awa, the deil's ouer grit wi' you!" cried Andrew, endeavouring to laugh, while he looked at Lord Riversdale, and inwardly confessed his faith in what she said; "Hae, there's

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half-a-crown for boding so meikle luck to my lord, and when I have time, I must see if ye can wyse to me a bonny lass with a heap o' siller."

The fortune-teller, in the instant, was evidently kindling again into another paroxysm; but Lord Riversdale peevishly pulled up the window, and requested the post-boys to drive on. "Is it possible," said he, "that Sandyford could listen to the hag's nonsense?"

"Trowth, my lord, it's very possible, and I wouldna be surprised that she had done mair to bring him into a right way of thinking than both of us, without her help, could have done."

"You seem to undervalue his lordship's good sense, if you expect any such effect," was the sharp remark of the viscount.

"Ye're a' wrang, my lord," replied our hero. "If the yerl had as little sense as the rest of the world, it might be so; but he's what's ca'd a man o' genius, and he'll create, by his own ingenuity, something rational out of the auld wife's raving, that would never enter ony common head."

In this sort of conversation they continued speaking, till the chase arrived at the portal of the mansion. On alighting there, Lord Riversdale was conducted to one of the drawing-rooms, and our hero alone sought the earl in the library, where he was sitting by himself in a reverie, and perhaps unconsciously still under the influence of the gipsy's rhapsodies.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A FRIEND.

"This winna do," cried Andrew seriously, on observing the absent and melancholy look of Lord Sandyford; "your lordship's like a fat goose, drapping awa'; and if ye're no ta'en frae the fire, ye'll soon no be worth the taking."

"Ha, Wylie!" exclaimed the earl, "what has become of you? Why did you quit me so abruptly?"

"Me quit you, my lord! how can that be said, when you stotted yoursel' out o' the room like a birsled pea?"

"Well, but where have you been? What have you been doing?" rejoined his lordship.

"It'll require thought to answer twa questions at once; and therefore I think we may as weel, for the present, set them by h'ands, for I have got dreadful news," said our hero, still gravely.

"Indeed!—What are they?—Have you heard any thing of Lady Sandyford?" cried the earl eagerly.

"Your lordship, ye ken, has debarred me from speaking anent her case, poor leddy; but what I have heard is another sort of thing," replied Andrew, still preserving the most serious countenance and voice.

"Have the French landed?" said his lordship gaily, endeavouring to rouse himself out of his moping humour.

"I'll no say the king's enemy has come to England; but somebody has come that your lordship, I'm thinking, will no be overly pleased to see—Lord Riversdale."

"Yes," said the earl, "he has come home; I heard of his being here."

"Yes, he's come; and it was at the request of my leddy, the countess," replied Andrew.

"Was it by your advice?" enquired his lordship sternly. But our hero was none intimidated by the severity of his manner; he felt, indeed, like the surgeon who probes the wound of a patient whom he esteems; and he disregarded the pain or the irritation which he at the moment occasioned.

"I think, my lord," said he, earnestly and unaffectedly, "that it is not possible to prevent me from speaking to your lordship about my leddy. Things come round that oblige me to interfere, as if I were ordained by heaven to be a mean of mending your broken happiness. Look, my lord, how the course of fortune works to that end: I was a friendless lad, and ye gied me a nest-egg out of the magnanimity of your own free-will; that was as a retaining fee to make me serve you, through weal or woe, a' my days. Then came my forgathering in the wood with the gipsies, which led me to get a glimpse of the history of the bairn of the Rose and Crown. Syne came on the crookit case of the

trial, wherein the hand of an overruling providence was made visible, as if to admonish your lordship to have some confidence in me, your bound and obligated humble friend and true servant. Then when ye refused to do justly and to love mercy, as I would have counselled your lordship, ye turned your back upon me, and left the room; but Fate's stronger than man. My Lord Riversdale, when ye were gone, came in—a very wonderful and mysterious thing, my lord; and although he's no a very placable commodity, he listened to reason, and we have been thegither to hear what the countess had to say for herself."

"And what did she say?" exclaimed the earl with emotion; for our hero had skilfully turned this address to chime in unison with the mood in which the gipsy's prediction had left his lordship; but suddenly checking himself, he added, proudly, "Wylie, I think this is useless conversation. Though Lady Sandysford were innocent of the suspected guilt, that fact would make no change in my determination. I will not disguise what you see clearly enough—that I still bear towards her much of my early affection; and often I think to myself that surely she is not naturally that automaton which she has ever been with me. But it is impossible for me to submit again to lead with her the life that we have so miserably led together."

"That," said Wylie, "may be a very rational resolution in the opinion of your lordship; but it is, I'm thinking, needful that it should be explained to the satisfaction of others. Lord Riversdale will no be overly content that his sister should dree the penance of an ill-doer, merely because your lordship docsna think she has been so cordial with you in all your vagaries as in the thoughtlessness of youth ye maybe expected."

"I do not think that I'm obliged to enter into any explanation with Lord Riversdale on the subject. Lady Sandysford went away of her own accord."

"That's no the point," cried Andrew; "that's no just what I was ettling at. Lord Riversdale has a right, and the world has a right, to know why it is that your lordship is to be allowed to indulge your own fancies with impunity, to the damage and detriment of a noble ledly."

The earl looked amazed at the intrepidity with which this

was expressed, and then said, "There is something about you, Wylie, that prevents me from quarrelling with you; but had any other man spoken to me with such an accent"—

"You would have done well to listen to him," interrupted Andrew calmly. "My lord, ye're in the wrang; ye're far wrang; ye may set up the golden image of your own opinions, but no honest man will bend down and worship before it; especially the like of me, who, for my own credit, would have your lordship beloved and respected. Your kindness to me I would reckon a disgrace to endure, if I didna think your lordship, by nature and habit, a man from whom it was an honour to be so favoured as I have been. Therefore, my lord, you will have to see Lord Riversdale."

"I will not, Wylie, nor any other man on the subject; I do violence to my own feelings in enduring to be so lectured by you."

"I never doubted that; and if there wasna a restraining power of inordinate civility about you towards me, ye wouldna have tholed the half of what I have said, half so long," cried Andrew briskly.

"By Jove!" said Lord Sandysford, scarcely able to preserve his temper, "this is driving me to the wall with a vengeance!" and he rose and walked to one of the windows. Our hero, who had been standing during the whole conversation, waited in silence for about a minute, and he then said, "Shall I ring the bell for Lord Riversdale?"

"Is he in the house?" cried the earl, startled by the question.

"Yes," was the cool answer; "he came with me; and the sooner the business is done the better."

His lordship made no reply, but walked several times hurriedly across the floor, turning up the curls from his forehead with his hand, and breathing thickly. Andrew was alarmed at his agitation, and the struggle which for some time he evidently made to control his feelings, but without effect; and said, in an accent of sorrow and anxiety, "I have gone too far: your lordship is ill."

"Not further than a friend should go—not further than a friend!" exclaimed the earl, but without looking at him.

Several minutes of silence succeeded ; during which his lordship so far mastered himself that he sat down and said, with considerable ease, " It must, I perceive, Wylie, come to that at last. I will see Riversdale, but not yet ; in the course of a short time bring him to me."

Our hero immediately moved to retire ; but in glancing back towards the earl he was struck with the ghastly paleness of his countenance, and stopped. " Wylie," said his lordship, with a voice of the most penetrating pathos, " you have made me feel that I have been acting an unworthy part ; not only my happiness, but my honour is in your hands."

Andrew was profoundly affected, and took two steps towards the earl, with the intention of saying something ; but his tongue refused its office, and he turned suddenly round and quitted the room.

CHAPTER LXIV.

DECISION.

THE interview between the earl and Lord Riversdale was conducted with some degree of formality on each side. The conversation was opened by the latter, expressing his regret at the unhappy incompatibility of mind, which had caused a meeting of so cold a character between them ; and he thence took occasion to revert to the circumstances connected with the child and with F - - - rs, observing, how easily it would have been to have proved the guilt of Lady Sandyford, if the slightest enquiry had been instituted.

" Had it been of any consequence to me personally, no doubt," replied the earl, " I should have instituted the investigation you speak of. But feeling as a man of honour, that I could with no justice take any legal steps against her ladyship, it was my motive to allow her to enjoy all the benefit of that forbearance."

" But my sister is innocent, is pure from all stain," said Riversdale, with animation.

"I rejoice to understand so," was the calm and polite remark of the earl.

"What then is to be done?—Why is she to suffer all the consequences of imputed guilt?" cried the viscount, somewhat sharply.

"My lord," replied the earl, "do not let us part under any misconception of this unhappy business. I have never ceased to love your sister, and I shall be proud to do every thing to promote her happiness. She lives but for the admiration of the crowd, and I will supply her to the utmost limit of my income to gratify her vanity. But only on this condition, that I hear of her no more."

"She will reject with scorn all pecuniary obligations. I suspect, my lord, that you do not know her worth," replied Riversdale, with an accent so bitter that it almost threw Sandysford off his guard. He, however, maintained himself so far, as to say coldly—

"Certainly I do not know her—if what I propose will not indemnify her for the loss of my company. But, my lord, I would beg your attention to one simple truth—we were for years together man and wife—in all that time she saw me plunging from error to error, rushing onward to ruin. Did it ever occasion to her a pang? Did she ever make one effort to check my infatuation? Or did ever the lucid intervals of contrition draw from her one word of soothing or of commiseration? No man need speak to me of the powers of Lady Sandysford's mind—none could be more surprised than I was at seeing such derogatory guilt imputed to her—none questioned more the complexion of the evidence by which it seemed confirmed. I rejoice that she has convinced you of her innocence. I believe her most entirely innocent—not merely because, as you say, her guilt, were she guilty, could be so easily proved; but because her declaration is in unison with the opinion which I entertain of her character—a moral persuasion that strong evidence indeed would be required to shake. But I would as soon take one of these china jars into my bosom for a wife, as the cold, the formal, the not less artificial Lady Sandysford. It is in vain, my lord, that you tell me of her personal innocence—she has been to me not only the

cause of much misery, but an enigma that has made me doubt the value of my own senses. For I do confess to you, that I have often thought there were the elements of great sensibility in your sister, but they as often eluded all my endeavours to call them forth—while she herself had no sympathy for others.

Our hero, who was present, and had hitherto sat silent, here interposed, and said, "True, my lord; but now she kens what drinkers dree, for humiliation takes the stone out of the heart, as my auld schoolmaster used to say, when he punished the pride of camstrarie laddies—and her leddyship's a creature of a new birth."

The explanation which Lord Sandfyord had given of his feelings, made a profound impression on the sensitive and too delicate Riversdale, and he remained, after this address of our hero, for some time silent and thoughtful. He then rose, and said to the earl—

"My lord, I enter into the full feeling of your sentiments, and will proceed no further in this business. I lament the misfortune of my sister, but I fear it is beyond remedy."

The earl bowed, and was changing the conversation to some general topic of the day, when Andrew started up, and cried, "Heavens and earth, sirs! are ye in your right senses? Is all my wark, and pains, and trouble, to end in a clishmaclaver about the hobleshow in France? My lord, how is this? and you, Lord Riversdale, are ye doited? Is Leddy Sandfyord to pine in grief, under the cloud of dishonour, because the tane o' you makes blethers sound like sense, which the other takes for gospel?"

And in saying these words he abruptly left the room, and without ceremony throwing himself into the post-chaise in which he had come with Lord Riversdale, and which still stood in the court, he was beyond the park-gate, and on the road to Bretonsbield Castle, before the two noblemen recovered from the astonishment which his vehemence and sudden departure had produced.

He reached the gate just as the countess was sitting down to her early solitary dinner. Her ladyship saw, as he precipitately entered, that he brought some important news, and ordering the servants to retire instantly, rose from table.

"Yon daffodil, your brother, and that corky, your gudeman, havena as meikle sense in baith their bouks as your leddyship has in your wee finger; so ye maun just come away with me to Chastington Hall," exclaimed Andrew, "for I wouldna be surprised to hear of their colleaguin to put you to death."

Lady Sandyford resumed her seat, and said, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean!" re-echoed our hero. "That ye're ouer lang here. I'm no, however, in a composure to tell you all the outs and ins of what has passed. But my lord says ye're a china flowerpot, and for that he'll no take you back; and your willy-wally of a brother sympathizes with the gross nonsense. Noo, my leddy, be what ye are—come with me to Lord Sandyford—his heart is yours, if he thought ye had ane to give in return. Confound him with your worth, and with that noble spirit that has made you feel so lowly; shine out with a glorious acknowledgment of past errors, and I'll lay my lugs the summer of baith your days is yet to come."

The countess smiled, and said, "I perceive my brother has given me up, and that you alone are my friend. I will go with you. It is an atonement that I make for the rashness of following my father's advice; and my heart derives an assurance from your warmth, that Lord Sandyford will do justice to my endeavours to recover his affection."

"That's a braw leddy, and ye'll get a bawbee to buy an apple at the fair!" exclaimed Andrew, in that sort of kindly admiration with which a child is praised for good behaviour.

CHAPTER LXV.

LOVE IN A DICKEY.

FROM a sentiment of delicacy towards Lady Sandyford, on account of the feelings with which she was at the time agitated, our hero not only declined a seat in her carriage, but insisted

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that her amiable abigail, Flounce, should mount the dickey with him; for being driven by post-horses, it was in consequence empty, her ladyship not choosing to take any of her father's servants along with her.

"Up, Mrs Flounce," said he, as she was on the point of stepping into the carriage after her mistress; "up aloft. I'm going with you, and we can court there so cosily; who knows but ye may get a smart husband before long?"

Flounce was one of those sensitive maidens, who never happen to be seated near a man without thinking of a lover; and she replied, with a giggle, as she eyed the dickey, "Don't be foolish—don't talk such stuff to me."

In the mean while he had shut the carriage-door.

"Weel, weel," said Wylie, "we'll speak of that again; but mount, my dawty." And with that he assisted her into the dickey, and was immediately at her side.

"Flounce," said he, when they were seated, "I have long had a great desire to hae some pleasant and canny conversation with you; for I hae a notion that ye're a lass of no small discretion."

The bosom of the inflammable abigail beat quickly, and she replied, I beg, Mr Wylie, that ye'll not talk none of that there nonsense to me; for I can assure you, sir, that I don't like no such larking; so I beg you'll be quiet."

"E'en's ye like, Meg Dorts!" exclaimed our hero, glad of an opportunity to end the badinage, which he was really at that time not in a humour to carry on, and he remained silent—sulky, as Flounce thought, on account of the proper spirit she had shown; but at last she began to fancy, that perhaps she had been a little too hard-hearted.

In the hurry and occupation of his mind, Andrew had entirely neglected to think of any dinner; but now that he was in some degree relieved from his anxiety, and driving as merrily along in a fine bracing air, as four post-horses could bear him, Nature, who never fails to vindicate any negligence, craved at last her due share of attention, and he felt himself exceedingly hungry. Entirely forgetting what he had been saying to Flounce, though it engaged her most serious cogitations, he again addressed her

with a slight accent of pathos in his voice, "Od, Mrs Flounce, but I feel something very queer about my heart."

"La!" cried the abigail, not displeased to have the conversation renewed—"How can you go for to say such things, Mr Wylie?"

"It's as sure as death; and unless I get something soon to comfort me, I dinna think I'll be able to stand out the journey," was the unaffected reply; to which he added, glancing at a basket which Flounce held in her lap, and from which the neck of a pint-bottle protruded from the midst of tawdry second-hand artificial flowers, and knots of riband, "What have ye got in that basket?"

"Nothing for you," said she, with a giggle.

"Robbery!" exclaimed he, in a jocular tone; but altogether unconscious of what was passing in her bosom—"Robbery is justifiable, when it's a work of needcessity; so I hae a great mind, Flounce, to see what ye hae hidden aneath thae gum-flowers."

"That you sha'n't, take my word on't," replied Flounce, with a jocund tartness; "so keep your distance, I say, and not offer for to go such lengths with me."

"Noo really, Flounce, this is very cruel of you; for my heart begins to fail me, and I would be vastly obligated for any thing of a cordial nature that ye can bestow."

The tender damsel began to feel her severity yielding to this sincere importunity; but still, for the honour and dignity of the sex, she was determined not to be lightly won, and she replied, "Mr Wylie, I would have you to know that I don't like any such insinuations."

"Very weel," cried Andrew laughing, "if you won't surrender at discretion, I'll tak you by storm;" and a struggle ensued, in which Flounce made a most Amazonian resistance.

Our hero, however, was successful; but instead of seizing her by the hands, and pressing them with a lover's ardour, he took hold of the basket by the handle, and wrenching it from her grasp, flung her gumflowers away, and drew out a cold veal-pie, which, with the pint-bottle—and that contained cherry-brandy—Flounce had provided for her own particular solace.

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Flounce at first affected a Juno-like indignation at the rape of the basket, while in her secret bosom, palpitations of delight reconciled her to the outrage. But as she was declaring her displeasure of the monstrous rudeness, and enjoying, at the same moment, the sweet anticipations of such an ardent passion, Andrew laid voracious hands on the pie, which quickly disappeared, and he completed its obsequies by a draught from the bottle.

"I'm a great deal the better o' that," said he, as he coolly handed back the basket, which Flounce examined as she received it; and seeing the pie had disappeared, cried, "Come, come, Mr Wylie, none of your tricks upon travellers. What have you done with the pie?"

"What hae I done wi't? Put it to the use for which it was created. I hae eaten't, and a very good commodity it was. The spice, I trow, wasna spare't."

"Well, to be sure, this is one way of making love," said Flounce to herself.

"It was a most merciful thing," resumed our hero, "that ye brought the pie with you, Flounce, for really the wind had so gaen about my heart that I was growing faint."

The mortified abigail sat amazed, and at a loss what to say or do. Sometimes she eyed her companion disdainfully askance; at others, she looked into her empty basket, as if to ascertain the actual disappearance of the past; and anon she darted her keen eyes forward, and elevating her neck with irrepressible ire, gave her head two or three brisk shakes.

"What gars you snuff the wind at that gait, Flounce?" said our hero. "I'll buy you twa bigger and better pies for't only day."

But the indignant waiting-gentlewoman was not to be conciliated by any such sordid promises. Indeed, what woman, who believed herself an object of the most tender solicitude, could keep her temper, on discovering that all the eagerness which, to her fond fancy, seemed so like love, was prompted by a base and vulgar appetite to possess her pie? Accordingly, during the remainder of the journey, she was both dignified and distant to our hero; and when he attempted to renew his familiarity,

after his hunger had been so effectually appeased, she repulsed him with indignation. He was, however, rather amused than disconcerted by her scorn, and took fifty ways of tormenting her, until, no longer able to bridle her rage, she assailed him with such a volley of epithets, that, by the time they reached Chastington Hall, they had come to decided hostilities, and she would not permit him even to assist her to alight from the dickey; the consequence of which was, that her foot slipped, and she came plump down upon the pavement, to the infinite diversion of the post-boys and of the servants, who, on hearing a carriage enter the court, had come flocking from all parts of the mansion.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE RECONCILIATION.

FOR some time after Wylie had so abruptly quitted the earl and Lord Riversdale, they sat in visible perplexity; a desultory conversation was maintained, but so broken, and with such long intervals of silence, that it was evidently the result of constraint; and that their minds were wandering to other objects of dearer interest.

At last Riversdale rose to go away, without having once again alluded to the situation of his sister; and he was too much at a loss to divine the cause of our hero's flight and absence, for he was but slightly acquainted with his direct and plain-dealing humour to express what he felt at a behaviour which to him seemed at once so extravagant and inexplicable. Not so the earl; the idea once or twice occurred to him that Andrew was gone to bring the countess herself; but he suppressed it, in the persuasion that he would not venture to take so great a liberty. It, however, had the effect of keeping him also silent; and perhaps it unconsciously induced him to request Riversdale to stay dinner with more earnestness than mere politeness required. Persuaded that Andrew was engaged on some business connected

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with the object of the viscount's visit, he was desirous that the result should be ascertained before they separated; but the mingled feelings with which he was agitated prevented him from speaking on the subject.

The forenoon was passed between them as forenoons are commonly passed by noblemen in the country. They conversed on various topics, such as ancient thrones overturned, old china, battles lost, the abolition of the German empire, with dissertations on the prices of pictures, interspersed with mournful eulogiums on the excellent qualities of deceased friends, and monstrous good anecdotes of the most ridiculous characters living; but not a word arose with respect to that business which had brought the one from Vienna; and, with the anguish of a secret poison, searched and penetrated the very core of the other's heart.

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The earl conducted his brother-in-law over the park, and showed him the changes made and contemplated; and Riversdale, who possessed a refined and elegant taste, suggested various improvements. Every thing between them proceeded in the most urbane manner; but ever and anon Lord Sandford glanced his eye towards the grand avenue, and made their walks wind among the grounds immediately in the vicinity of the mansion. Still there was no appearance of our hero; and when the first dinner-bell gave warning that it was time to dress, they returned together, both perplexed and thoughtful; inasmuch, that had they been questioned as to the topics of their previous conversation, it is probable that neither the one nor the other could have given any rational answer.

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At last the sound of a carriage was heard to enter the portal; and the earl, who had by that time met Riversdale again in the drawing-room, became pale and agitated, and immediately retired. Soon after, our hero came in alone; and taking a seat abruptly without speaking, stretched out his feet, and lying back in the chair, seemed to be gazing at the pictures on the ceiling, while his eye was constantly turning with anxiety towards the door.

Lord Riversdale looked at him with the most intense curiosity; but a feeling which he could not master deprived him of the power of speaking.

When Andrew had sat in this state for about five minutes, he

rose and moved with rapid and disordered steps towards the door. In an instant, however, he checked himself, and walking calmly back to his chair, folded his arms, and looked gloomily on the floor.

Another five minutes passed, and he began to rub his hair with his hand, and to beat with his heel; at last he said to Lord Riversdale, "Dog on't, but this is dreadful."

A servant at that moment happened to have occasion to come into the room, and, as he opened the door, Andrew started up and rushed towards it; but on seeing who it was, he shrunk back, and walking to one of the windows, retired behind the curtains, as if to hide the emotion of his disappointment.

"What have you done?" cried Lord Riversdale, alarmed by his strange and agitated manner.

"Made a spoon or spoilt a horn," was the impressive reply.

"For the love of heaven, explain yourself!" exclaimed his lordship earnestly.

"When my head's round again in its right posture. Then; but hae patience till then," said our hero, becoming still more and more agitated.

"I fear——" resumed Riversdale.

"So do I, so do I!" interrupted Andrew, running out from behind the curtain; but all at once checking himself, he added, calmly, "What should I fear? I hae done but what duty and honesty required of me; the issues are in the hands of Providence, and they canna be in better. My lord, we're twa fools to be racking ourselves at this gait; I ought to have mair confidence in both Lord and Lady Sandfyrd, than to give myself up to a panic like this."

At these words, several bells were rung hastily, and a bustle was heard in the gallery, which led to the drawing-room. Lord Riversdale instinctively opened the door, and a blaze of lights was seen approaching. Andrew darted a hasty glance out, and, uttering a shout of gladness and delight, rushed into the gallery; and in less than a minute after, returned, leading the earl and countess, with such a benign expression of satisfaction in his countenance, that Lord Riversdale often afterwards declared he had never seen any thing half so magnificent, and wondered how

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a figure so mean, and a physiognomy so common, could bear the impress of so much dignity. When they reached the middle of the room, and when the servants, who on hearing of their lady's arrival attended with lights to conduct her along the gallery, had retired, Lord Sandford said, in a gay manner, which, however, became gradually serious and elevated, "What a pity it is that the mythology of the poets is not true! I should otherwise this night have raised an altar to Mercury, and instituted some social festival in honour of him, as Andrew Wylie. My friend, you have taught me one thing ;—when we do an act of kindness, it is the benevolence of Heaven directing us to achieve some good for ourselves. The partiality that I from the first felt for you, and which dictated to me that interest I must ever take in your welfare, was the pure prompting of my better angel to work out, through your means, the restoration of myself, of my happiness, and of this noble woman's inborn latent worth."

"Weel, weel, my lord," cried our hero, hardly able to repress the tears of joy that were starting into his eyes, "see that it be sae, but the less that's said about by-gones the better ; so, as the dinner bell's noo ringing, wi' your leave to-day, my lord, only to-day, I'll lead my ledly to her place at the table."

His lordship instantly took the countess by the hand ; and with a look of thanks that was worth more than a thousand pounds weight of gold, as Andrew afterwards said, presented her to our hero. Lord Riversdale followed them mechanically ; for the whole scene appeared to him as something which surpassed his comprehension.

CHAPTER LXVII.

PATRONAGE.

ALTHOUGH our hero, actuated by gratitude and affection, had laboured to effect the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandford by the most direct means, and with the most determined energy ; yet when the event was accomplished, it is not to be

questioned that considerations less disinterested than those feelings, mingled with the agreeable reflections which naturally belong to the success of a benevolent purpose. He could not but be sensible that in their happiness he had obtained a fulcrum for the engines that were to raise his own fortune, and that, in all probability, he had secured the patronage of the Marquis of Avonside, as well as that of the earl. But we should be doing him injustice, to suppose that the persuasion of this produced any change in his conduct or demeanour. He had, as we have early insinuated, formed in his outset a plan of life, and to that he adhered with the constancy and the zeal of a character endowed with strong inherent powers and sensibilities, the value of which was fully appreciated both by Lord and Lady Sandyford, in a conversation with Lord Riversdale one morning, after Andrew had left Chastington Hall, and returned to London.

His lordship, on remarking upon his earnest simplicity and peculiar humours, observed, that he thought it was the duty equally of the two families to unite their interest and influence for his advancement.

"I expect," said the countess, "that my father will feel the obligation; but for Sandyford and myself, he is our friend; and we shall never insult the greatness of his mind with the offer of any favour, for we owe him every thing. Our part is to promote his happiness and his honour."

And when, in the course of a few days after this conversation, the Marquis of Avonside came to congratulate them on their reunion, the subject was renewed, with a declaration on the part of the earl, that, in a pecuniary point of view, he considered his whole fortune at the disposal of Wylie; but he added, laughingly, "Perhaps if you knew the being, my lord, you would think there was no great generosity in my saying so, though I do it with the most perfect sincerity."

"Then," replied the marquis, "I see what I ought to do. I will take him under my own particular patronage; and the first thing I shall do on my return to town will be to see him, and ascertain what he is fit for, and then the whole weight of my influence shall be exerted in his favour."

"I doubt, my lord," replied the earl somewhat waggishly—

for he did not entertain the most awful respect for the talents or the discernment of his lordship—"it will not be easy to ascertain what he is fit for; but he is able, I think, for a greater office than I conceive it is in your lordship's power to obtain."

"Lord Sandysford," said the marquis, with a manner that he meant should be emphatic, "you have taken too little interest in public affairs, to know the extent of my influence with his majesty's government, and you lean with too decided a bias to the opposition, to appreciate the sort of talent requisite for office. It is not the splendour of speculative ability that we seek, but a plodding industry, that never tires at its task."

"True," said the earl, "I have been somewhat a truant in my public duty; but your lordship knows that were things properly managed, the opinion of the few—and the wise are always the few—would ever predominate."

"I am not surprised that such should be the sentiment of a regular opponent to his majesty's government; but, my lord, as our political opinions can never coalesce, it is unnecessary to discuss such topics," replied the marquis.

The earl was tempted to rejoinder, "Unless there be a change of ministry;" but he suppressed the sarcasm, and said cheerfully, "Well, I commit him to your providence, my lord, and shall long exceedingly till I know the rich effects."

The Marquis of Avonside, who imagined that it was necessary for the safety of the state that he should be always on his post, soon after this conversation returned to London, and immediately on his arrival sent for our hero; for his lordship held it as a maxim, that expedition was the soul of business.

The person of Wylie was not altogether unknown to the marquis; he had seen him frequently at Lady Sandysford's parties; but notwithstanding, he was a little startled when he saw so insignificant a looking personage enter his library. After requesting him to take a seat, and when he had resumed his own chair at the writing-table, his lordship said, in the most condescending manner—"Both my Lord and Lady Sandysford have recommended you to me in the strongest manner, and Lord Riversdale also has expressed the most earnest solicitude that I should use my influence in your behalf. Desirous to gratify the

wishes of such dear relations, and to manifest my own high sense of your prudence and zeal, I have sent for you this morning, with the view of enquiring in what manner my influence can be serviceable to your interests."

Andrew had some notion of the general character of his lordship, and this short speech enabled him to understand it thoroughly.

"I am greatly obligated," was his answer, "for such kindness; but I am no able to point out, at this present time, just to say how your lordship's great power and efficacy might be serviceable."

"I can easily obtain for you a lucrative appointment abroad," said the marquis.

"That would be a great thing," replied Andrew; "but as I'm of a learned profession, I would fain go on with it, rather than gang abroad in a situation where I might not be able to give satisfaction, and might, in consequence, affront your lordship, and thereby lose that good opinion, which is of mair value to me than gold."

"You are a very discreet young man," said the marquis, conciliated by the address with which this was said. "But in your profession I may have it in my power to assist you."

"There can be no doubt of that, my lord—your lordship has it in your power to be the maker of a man, whenever it stands with your own pleasure," replied Andrew respectfully.

The marquis smiled in the most self-complacent manner, and with an accent of the greatest good-humour, said, "Then I can assure you, Mr Wylie, that I was never more disposed to make any man than at this time; only show me the way."

This was coming effectually to the point; and Andrew, aware of the strict honour with which his lordship redeemed his promises, said, "I'm sure, my lord, it is not to seek what I ought to say in the way of thankfulness, for this great patronage; but for some sma' time yet, I cannot weel see how it may be rightly applied. However, if your lordship, when I find a fitting occasion to call for your powerful succour, would be pleased to gie me a bit lift in the way o' business, I'll be greatly your debtor."

"Not at all, Mr Wylie, not at all; and I must say that your

modesty and prudence increase my desire to serve you," replied the marquis. "I will not, however, promise to make you my agent, while my old friend Jack Docquet lives; but he is now above seventy, and of an apoplectic corpulency. However, you may rely upon me; and whenever my interest and influence can be of use, freely command them."

This interview our hero ever justly considered as one of the most important events in his life; for the marquis spoke of him not only as a prodigy of prudence, but possessed of the most promising talents in his profession; at the same time declaring his own determination to patronize a young man who seemed destined to confer so much lustre on his country.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

RETROSPECTIONS.

For a considerable time after the reunion of Lord and Lady Sandyford, no particular incident occurred in the life of our hero. He continued to give the same plodding attention to his duties in the office of Mr Vellum; but it was remarked by Pierston, who was unacquainted with the important service he had rendered to his patron, that he seemed to feel more confidence in himself, and to move, as it were, with a freer spirit in the world—the unconscious influence of being sensible that he had obtained pledges of future prosperity.

With his grandmother he continued in the same dutiful correspondence, through the medium of Mr Tannyhill; but while he cheered her with the assurance of the sunshine that Heaven continued to shed upon his prospects, he wrote with a temperance and moderation that gave her no reason to suppose he had met with any extraordinary instance of good fortune.

With Mr and Mrs Ipsey he had continued from his arrival on the most intimate terms. The retired solicitor not only relished humour, but was himself a humorist, and our hero had always

a plate at his Sunday's dinner. The old gentleman was, indeed, his chief confidant, and by his experience enabled him to lay out the proceeds of his salary to the best advantage. On different occasions, Andrew had insisted on repaying the money which was so generously advanced for his outfit; but Mr Ipsey as often refused it in the most decided manner. After the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandyford, however, partly with the view of indirectly discharging the debt, but chiefly to express the obligations that he felt himself under for the kindness he had received from Mr Ipsey, he presented his kinswoman with a handsome piece of plate, and from time to time continued to make her small presents of lace, which he had observed was almost the only article of finery that she admired; but ladies in general, whatever their stock and tastes may be, are particularly pleased with gifts of lace, especially Mecklenburg, Brussels, or Valenciennes, when it has been smuggled by the donors themselves.

By these means, his character, without being materially raised in the opinion of his early friends, was fully established as a young man of good sense, destined to acquire riches. His grandmother and the schoolmaster, on the receipt of every new letter, were the more and more persuaded of this, and that he would surpass all their brightest hopes. This persuasion, however, was not founded on any thing he said, but upon the constancy of success which seemed to attend him, and also upon some imperfect report of the company in which he had been seen by Miss Mizey and Mary Cunningham during their visit to London.

With respect to Miss Cunningham, from the time she had returned Martha saw her but seldom; and when she enquired occasionally for Andrew, it was in a politer, but far less agreeable manner, than before her visit to the metropolis. The old woman remarked the difference in speaking of it to the master, but ascribed it to anxiety on her brother's account, who, after his removal to the Craiglands, grew every day worse and worse, insomuch, that towards the end of the year his recovery was deemed hopeless.

Mr Tannyhill, who had ever taken the warmest interest in

the destiny of his pupil, and which his situation as amanuensis to Martha tended to foster, took a different view of the alteration in the deportment of Mary Cunningham. Being occasionally invited on the Sunday evenings to drink tea with Miss Mizy and the laird, he had acquired a more distinct knowledge of the sort of connexions which Andrew had formed; for he had led the conversation often to the subject, and it occurred to him that our hero, presuming on his old familiarity with the young lady, had, perhaps, too eagerly obtruded himself on her notice, by which he had probably offended her pride, especially as he observed, that when her aunt spoke of his behaviour in terms of approbation, she sometimes expressed her astonishment at the means by which he had managed to get himself introduced into such fashionable society.

From an amiable solicitude to lessen any prejudice which he thought adverse to the good opinion that he himself entertained of his favourite, he took every opportunity of speaking in the kindest manner of the affections and principles of Andrew; and when Miss Cunningham once happened to say a little petulantly, "I wonder, Mr Tannyhill, what makes you think that I care to hear about the oddity?" he mildly rebuked her, by observing, that "you canna, surely, Miss Mary, but take a pleasure to hear of the well-doing of a parish bairn? Ye were brought up in the innocence of childhood together—ye breathed the same pure halesome air—beeked in the same sunshine—heard the same bonny birds in the spring—and gathered the same summer-flowers—a' things which make up the ingredients of a charm that the kindly heart would never part with. It's no right of you, Miss Mary, to speak so lightly of Andrew; for it's my notion he'll be a credit to us a' yet. Ye see your aunt, Miss Mizy, who is a most discreet lady, thinks better of the poor laddie, and I'm sure she has had but sma' reason to do so; for ye canna but mind how when the captain, that's now bedrid, and Andrew, were callants at my school, the dreadfu' damage they did to her mourning, on account of that queer pawkie pyet, whilk was in the use and wont of stealing her thread-papers."

"Oh!" replied Mary laughingly, while a gentle blush tinged her neck and bosom, and heightened the bloom of her face, "I'll

never forget it, and the sad hand poor Wheelie made with his task of fifty psalms till I helped him."

"Then," said the master with guileless simplicity, "what for, Miss Mary, do ye so geck at the honest lad's thriving?"

"I don't know why I should," was the answer, "for I'm sure it always gives me pleasure; but my aunt has taken it into her head that he's another Solomon, and is constantly plaguing me about paying him a visit when he's lord mayor of London. 'Tis surprising to hear what nonsense sensible people will sometimes talk. I dare say he's a very kind and dutiful grandson, and in time he may return among us, like the nabobs from India, with a heavy purse and a broken constitution, and nobody in the parish will be better pleased to see him than myself; but really, Mr Tannyhill, I do not understand why you should fancy that I can have any particular interest in the matter."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so, Miss Mary," replied the simple advocate; "for I had a fear that maybe, when ye met him at that grand ball in London, he had done something that wasna just suitable for Martha Docken's oye to the Laird of Craiglands' dochter."

The blood instantaneously overspread the face of his fair auditor, and deepened her roses to the colour of the ruby; but presently recovering herself, she laughed, and said, "O dear no! On the contrary, he behaved far better than I could have thought. I had no idea that the creature was possessed of half so much mother wit. He was both better bred, and far more sensible, than any other gentleman we met there."

But although this conversation, on the whole, afforded unequalled delight to the innocent dominie, there was yet something in the behaviour of Miss Cunningham that he could not comprehend; and he set down her apparent dislike to hear of Andrew's prosperity to that jealousy of adventurous talent, which about this time began to enter into competition with the entailed gentility of those feudal relics, the west country lairds—not reflecting that single women never think on such a subject, nor even married ones, when they have many daughters to dispose of.

CHAPTER LXIX.

PARTNERSHIP.

In the mean time, Andrew was the frequent guest of Lord and Lady Sandyford, who continued to reside at Chastington Hall; and in his excursions from London he generally paid Mordaunt a visit, who always renewed his wish that he would allow him an opportunity to serve him, as if the unsatisfied feeling of gratitude was become uneasy.

"The time's coming," he would as often reply; "and, whenever I'm of a legal capacity to enter into business on my own account, I'll then make bold to beg the help of your friendship."

The earl and countess made no professions. They took up his interests more earnestly; for, ascribing their mutual happiness entirely to his fearless and free integrity, they studied the means of promoting his fortune, as a more worthy and delicate return than the sordid offerings of pecuniary generosity.

But a sudden event brought into play and action all the favourable dispositions of the friendships he had formed. Old Jack Docquet, solicitor to the Marquis of Avonside, expired, as his lordship had anticipated, of apoplexy; and with that punctual respect to his promise, which constituted one of the most honourable traits in that nobleman's character, our hero was informed by express of the occurrence, and that his lordship's manifold and complicated affairs awaited his acceptance.

The habit of drolling with his higher acquaintance made Andrew often indulge himself in the same humour with his master; and accordingly, on going to chambers on the morning in which he received this important information, he asked permission to visit his friends at Chastington Hall, and Mr Mordaunt, at the same time requesting the advance of a small sum to account, for the expenses of his journey.

As Vellum was writing out the cheque, Andrew said, "I'm thinking, sir, that maybe it would be as weel, providing you were agreeable, that we should gang into partnership thegither."

The solicitor paused, as if he had been smitten with a sudden

judgment, as Andrew himself described it; and said, "What did you say, Mr Wylie?"

"I was saying," resumed Andrew, "that may be it might be as well if you would tak me into partnership."

"Partnership!" exclaimed the solicitor; "why, you know nothing of business. You have acquired neither the requisite knowledge of the forms, or the substantial of the law."

"I didna say any thing about them. I only thought that, if you would take me in for a partner, some good might come out o't."

Mr Vellum remembered in what way Lord Sandysford had saddled him with seven hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and did not much like this proposition, on the eve of a visit to his lordship. He however replied, in a calm and reasonable manner, "In course of time, Wylie, you may perhaps have reason to expect an interest along with me; but at present you must be sensible that you are still too young."

"Mr Pitt," replied Andrew, "wasna muckle older than me, when he was made minister of Great Britain, France, and Ireland."

"You do not surely compare yourself with Mr Pitt?" exclaimed Vellum, petrified at the remark.

"O dear, no!" answered Andrew; "I had nae sic thought. He was minister of three kingdoms; but I'm only wanting a bit share or persion in your business. There's an unco difference between it and three kingdoms, Mr Vellum."

The solicitor did not well know what answer to make to this. He was chilled to think with what pertinacity Andrew adhered to his proposal; and, somewhat eagerly, said, "Pray, Mr Wylie, has any body suggested this notion to you? I am surprised how it could be supposed you were qualified already to take a part as principal in my business."

"I'll be vera plain wi' you," replied Andrew; "just as plain and as pleasant, as ye are wi' me. Nobody said any thing to me on the subject, nor did I ask the advice of any body; but I thought ye were yoursel' by this time sensible o' the weight of my interest."

"I have had reason," retorted Vellum, in an acute tone, "to know that weight."

"I thought so," replied our hero coolly; "and I thought likewise you would consider't. I would therefore be vera glad, if ye would gie me a short answer as to whether ye will be content with me as a partner, or no?"

"Some time hence, Mr Wylie, I think the question may be put with more propriety. At present, you must be well aware that you are not ripe for what you propose."

"I'm no presuming to say that I am; but, Mr Vellum, a man wi' money in his purse can command talents and learning, though he hae neither himsel'. There are plenty of well-learned able young men, and some auld han's too, in our profession, whose help I can get wi' thankfulness—they being without friends."

This was a touch of policy beyond the utmost conceptions of Vellum; and he said, in an accent of evident alarm, "You seem to presume on the partiality which Lord Sandfyord has shown you."

"No," replied our hero dryly. "But I do not see what that has to do with our present discourse—which was to know, if you would take me into partnership?"

"Truly, Mr Wylie," answered the solicitor, moderating his manner, "you could scarcely expect an immediate answer to such a proposition."

"I wasna expecting an immediate answer. Far be it frae me, Mr Vellum, to put you into ony disorder or agitation on the subject; for if I get a favourable waft o' your good-will, I can bide a wee for an answer, as to the amount of the share that ye're willing to give me."

Vellum, while he bit his lips with vexation, could not refrain from smiling at this; and said, with his wonted worldly off-hand good-humour, "Well, well, I see how it is, Wylie; we are to be partners, and I don't think we shall quarrel about the terms."

"I dinna think so either," replied Andrew; "and as an earnest that I wasna coming all as a cess upon you, a' wi' the rake and no wi' the shool, I hae some reason to think that I can wyse you the business of Sir Thomas Beauchamp and Mr Mordaunt, the whilk will help to make the pot boil between us. And the Marquis of Avonside has this morning sent me word, that old Mr Docquet, his solicitor, has departed this life, and that his

lordship's concerns, which were in his hands, are welcome to my acceptance."

Vellum laughed, and said, "And so, with all this in store, you have been slyly feeling my pulse. Upon my conscience, Wylie, if you are not the most unfathomable being I ever knew. However, to show you that I duly appreciate the importance of the clients that you are likely to bring to us, I will admit you at once to a half of our mutual business, and the partnership shall be dated from this day."

"A bargain be't," cried Andrew gaily; adding, "And ye may depend on't, Mr Vellum, that the horse that brings grist to the mill is as useful as the water that ca's the wheel. I'll no trouble you with ony interference in the professional parts of the business; but I'll ettle my best to gather wark for your head and hands."

In this way the footing of Andrew was established in the world; and Vellum, with his characteristic promptitude, then said, "A number of friends and clients are to dine with me to-day at Sandyford House, and you must be of the party, when I will announce the connexion that has been formed, and which, I doubt not, will redound to our mutual satisfaction and advantage."

CHAPTER LXX.

ECONOMY.

IN returning home to dress for dinner, our hero reflected that it would be no longer respectable in him to continue those parsimonious habits which he had hitherto maintained, and that although it was still prudent to adhere to an economical system, yet it was not fit he should continue to present to his old friends that appearance of penury, of which he had not, without obvious reasons, been accused. Accordingly, he determined to sacrifice to the opinion of the world, and, aware of the character which he

possessed among his acquaintances, he determined to surprise them.

In one of the obscure streets in the neighbourhood of Queen's Square, where he lodged in Vellum's private residence, he had noticed a bill in the window of a large house, which had evidently been the abode, at one time, of some eminent and opulent character, and in going to Sandysford House to dinner, he walked to examine the neglected premises.

He found the mansion, without being exactly old-fashioned, behind the present taste, but spacious in the apartments, and richly ornamented. It had, in fact, been erected and fitted up by an old bachelor of an eccentric disposition, and who had indulged his peculiar humour in the style and decorations. Much of the furniture was so adapted, both in form and place, to the rooms, that it partook of the nature of fixtures, and as every thing was in excellent order, the house was ready for the immediate reception of a tenant.

Andrew was pleased with the general air of the whole, and amused himself with the surprise he would give to his friends, by inviting them to such a place; for the terms, both on account of the situation, and the general singularity of the edifice, were very low, and he determined at once to take it. Accordingly, he went immediately to the house-agent, and settled the business.

In his way to Sandysford House, he called at the confectioner's who supplied the parties of his fashionable friends, to secure for him a suitable housekeeper and butler.

"They are to be," he said, "the very best of their kind. The woman maun be used to a genteel economy, but to the style of the best families; and the man is to be a gawsy, middle-aged, staid, and orderly carle, who has lived with bachelor gentlemen o' discretion and prudence. He'll need a bit laddie to help him, but that I'll let him choose for himself; ye'll be sure, however, that ye get me folk that can be trusted, and I'll pay them the same wage that is paid in the best houses; and ye'll lose nae time about this job, for I am to hae a party this day month at dinner, for the which you will mak a' preparation. Ye'll see that every thing is the vera best o' its kind; in short, Mr Comfit,

as ye say in your advertising accounts of my Lady This's ball, and my Lord That's dinner, we maun hae a' the delicacies o' the season. It's my first dinner, and I would be affrontit gin it wasna past common—which it must both be in the rarity and the goodness. And I'll tell you another thing, Mr Comfit—the dainties of the first and second course ye'll serve up on the finest china, with a' the requisite appurtenances, in the best order—for we maun first please the eye, and satisfy the mouth, before we play ony pranks; but in the third course, and the dessert, ye maun show your cunning—baith in the viands and the vessels. As for the eatables, I say nothing, let them only be the rarest and the best; but for the vessels, knives and forks, &c., ye'll go through all the curiosity and china shops, and pick out the queerest and drollest sort of plenishing that's possible to be had. Ye'll no buy't, however, for that would be needless; but hire it, let the cost be what it may."

These instructions were promised to be carefully fulfilled; and we need not add, that orders for luxuries, by those who are supposed able to pay for them, are never in London stinted in the supply.

No similar event, in the higher sphere of the world of fashion, had, for many years, excited so much speculation as the idea of our hero's dinner. The guests invited amounted to twenty-one, and the majority were persons of the first rank and consideration in the country, actuated, in general, by the curiosity of the thing; some, however, were influenced by the persuasion, that, under Andrew's simplicity and plain exterior, talents for business of a high order were concealed, and several were interested in the affair, by their delight and relish of his caustic humour. All agreed in one thing, that a dinner from Wylie must of itself be something very extraordinary; and that in a street which none of their coachmen or servants had ever heard of, it could not fail to afford them much amusement, whatever the fare might be. A vast deal of talk was the consequence, and, upon comparing notes, it was soon discovered that the party had been selected with great sagacity; insomuch, that interest began to be made for a place. But our hero was inexorable; none but his elderly and most distinguished friends and acquaint-

tances were invited, and his answers to the younger sprigs of nobility and fashion, who were continually boring him for places at what they called his benefit, was uniformly the same—"Stay till your betters be serv't."

The affair at last amounted to such importance, that the ladies began to lay themselves out for invitations, and a solemn representation was made to him by three duchesses, four marchionesses, five countesses, six viscountesses, and seven baronesses, besides the daughters of all orders of the nobility, and ladyships of minor degree, without number. But to them likewise his answer was—"Patience, patience—cry a' at aince, leddies, and see who will be first serv't." This, however, had no effect in pacifying them.

Whenever he made his appearance at any party, up came a flock of matrons and their goslings, flying with their fans in the one hand and their trains in the other, to pester him for invitations to his party. Among others, the Dowager Lady Clackit was the most perilous and vexatious in her importunity; insomuch, that one night at the Duchess of Dashingwell's assembly, he took her ladyship aside, and complained to her in a most disconsolate tone, about the plague he suffered on account of his dinner.

"Is't no a hard case, my leddy," said he, "that I should be driven to my wit's end by the women, about this bit chack o' dinner? Every body but you, my leddy, just wearies me out o' my senses. Noo, this is vera hard, my leddy, for ye ken I hae had for some time a notion o' gieing a ball and supper, whereat ye're to do the honours o' the meeting. I wonder how it is that they winna be pacified with that expectation. But I'm resolved, if they fash me ony mair, the deevil be licket of ball or supper they'll get frae me, or any other civility, if I hear, after this night, another word frae them on this subject. Noo, as I consider you, my leddy, interested in this, ye'll no blame me if ye're a' disappointed; for what I would do, if the women would but behave themselves, would be something, my leddy, to be spoken o' when ye're dead and gone."

Her ladyship was won; and the whole females of the party were, in the course of a few minutes, quieted, and desisted from

their importunity, under an assurance that Wylie was to give a most incomparable ball, and that Lady Clackit was to do the matronly honours on the occasion. Some thought that Andrew had not made a very good choice, but all agreed that, when it did take place, the thing would be exquisite.

While thus an underplot was working to effect, time ran on, and the day and hour of the dinner arrived. Carriage after carriage drove up to the darkened front of our hero's antique mansion; and the moment that each successive guest stepped into the hall, he was smitten with a conviction that he had formed a false estimate of the feast. The hall, it is true, had an air of singularity in its appearance; but the footman, who gave admittance, was dressed in a remarkably handsome, but plain livery, and the general effect of the first impression was strikingly respectable and genteel.

On ascending to the drawing-room, some little emotion of wonderment was excited by the style of the room. It was splendid, but strange. The furniture was in an odd taste, and the ornaments were curious; but the general effect was good, and every one felt that he was in no common place. Andrew received his guests with his wonted ease; but none of them were half so much surprised, both at the house and the company, as Mr Vellum.

The admiration of all, however, was the dinner-table. Nothing could exceed the elegance, and, at the same time, the simplicity of the first and second course. The service was truly beautiful, the cookery was delicious, and the wines were incomparable. London had indeed been ransacked for them. The whole world could produce no better of their kinds; and a sensation of wonder and astonishment made the guests look at one another, utterly unable to divine by what enchantment such a palace and banquet had been raised.

At the third course, the mirthful knavery of their host manifested itself. Such a congregation of ancient and grotesque china had never been assembled on one board together; and peals of laughter broke forth as each new curiosity was set down.

"Ay," said our hero, enjoying their amusement, "ye ken I

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haena dishes enew o' ae sort to serve you a' through alike; so I thought that I would make up, according to my ain taste, something just as fine and genteel as could well be; and ye see here such a show as I am sure the Prince of Wales himsel', wi' all his fee-fa-fums, canna match."

But the third course was only the morning star to the sun of the dessert. The pagodas of India, and the temples of China and Japan, and the produce of all climates, seemed to have been laid under contribution. In a word, the house, the treat, the wines, and the master, were pronounced unparalleled; but the gusto which pervaded all, was the most racy thing in the whole concern; and the description excited an inordinate expectation among the ladies respecting the ball and supper. It was agreed among them that it ought to be a fancy ball; and Lady Clackit was authorized to represent the wishes of the community of fashion on the subject.

"Me gie a fancy ball, Leddy Cleckit!" was the exclamation. "Do you think I hae lost my judgment? What would the neighbours say of a fancy ball and sicklike masquerading, in my sober and methodical house? No, no, my ledgy—nae sic flagaries wi' me. I just mean to gie a decent dance to fifteen lads and fifteen lasses—a very good number for a country dance; and there's a blind fiddler in our neighbourhood, that has promised to come for half-a-crown, bread and cheese, and a dram; and I'll gie you penny pies, eggs, and strong ale, when ye're weary wi' dancing to his springs. But a fancy ball! Na, na, my ledgy; unless ye can fancy the ball like what I hae told you of, the sorrow o' a ball shall be in my house."

"You cannot be in earnest!" cried her ladyship. "You could never expect me to take a part in such a hop of a thing as that?"

"Then if ye winna do't, I assure you nae ball or supper shall be given by me; and so I leave you to settle't wi' your kimmers and cronies the best manner you can."

"Mr Wylie, you have used me very ill," said her ladyship, walking away in a huff, to declaim against the shabby avaricious wretch, as she called him.

But some of the more knowing matrons were not taken in by

her report, especially his old friend the Duchess of Dashingwell, who went to him immediately, and proposed herself as the matron, Lady Clackit having resigned. In this our hero was fairly matched by the women, for he never had intended to give any entertainment at all; and the whole, from first to last, was but a stratagem to be released from their importunities. The offer of the Duchess of Dashingwell, however, was an honour of which he knew the full value, and did not for a moment hesitate.

"Your grace," said he, "kens the conditions, and that my house is no used to the servitude of balls and routes: but if you will hae a gathering in't, I'm sure it wouldna become me to refuse. But, my leddy duchess, I'll just hae the fiddler that frightened that weak woman, Leddy Cleckit, and the penny pies, the eggs, and the strong ale—that's what ye'll get."

"Oh, it will be delightful!" exclaimed her grace; "it will be the most unique thing ever heard of. I wouldn't, for all the balls and routes of the season, lose such a treat. Do, pray, fix at once about it!"

"That I leave to your grace's convenience," said Andrew. "Since ye will hae sic daffin, ye maun time't yoursel'. I leave c' the invitations to you—only the number maun be limited to fifteen couple, in the first instance."

The duchess flew about the room, delighted with her commission, and every one was anxious to be placed on her list; so that when the ball did take place, it was quite as extraordinary of its kind as the dinner; for Andrew, on consenting to enlarge the number of the invitations, restricted the selection to the gayest and most beautiful of all her grace's acquaintances.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

CHARLES PIERSTON, who had for some time been settled in business by his uncle, on his own account, called one evening

on our hero, and begged the loan of a thousand pounds. Wylie was not surprised at the application; for various circumstances had come to his knowledge, which gave him reason to suspect, that the prosperity of Charles was deeply affected by some of those political convulsions which at that time deranged the commercial relations of the world.

"Charles," said Andrew, "I dinna refuse your request, but it's proper and fit that ye should enable me to ascertain if the thousand pounds can be of any real service; therefore gang and bring me your books, and when I have ta'en a blink of their contents, I'll gie you an answer, and I sincerely wish it may be in the shape of a cheque for the sum you want."

Pierston was not altogether perfectly satisfied with this reply; but it was so reasonable that he could not object to the proposal, and accordingly went for his books.

During his absence Wylie sent for one of the ablest accountants, who, by the time Charles returned, he had in the house. He did not apprise his friend of this circumstance; on the contrary, the moment he appeared with the books, he took them from him, and said, "Ye maun leave them with me till the morn, when ye'll come, and I'll gie them back, I hope, wi' a favourable answer."

Charles felt something like mortification at this strict and austere mode of proceeding; for he calculated on the familiarity of ancient friendship, and he did not conceive his situation to be at all such as that the application for a temporary loan should be treated so particularly. However, he suppressed the slight feeling of resentment, which arose, as it were, in anticipation of a refusal, while he suffered the sensation of that chill and disagreeable experience of the true nature of the world, which is commonly the usual foretaste of misfortune.

When he returned in the morning, his old friend received him with more than usual cordiality, and kept him for some time in general conversation. Pierston had discernment enough to perceive that this was but the prelude to a negative; and after enduring the effort, that Andrew was evidently making to prepare him for the decision he had obviously come to, he said abruptly, "But have you examined my books?"

Our hero did not immediately reply, but looked for some time as if at a loss for an answer.

"I see how it is," resumed Pierston; "you do not think it prudent to grant me the loan?"

"I would give you the money," replied Andrew, "if it could be of any service; but your affairs are widely scattered, and although all is clear and satisfactory, I am sure that, in the present state of the world, you cannot get the better of your difficulties. Charlie, let me gie you a word of counsel—strive no longer with your fortune. In a word, end your business, and go into the Gazette as a bankrupt."

Charles became pale, his lips quivered, and a momentary flash of indignation gleamed from his eyes.

"Dinna mistake me, Charlie, I am speaking as a friend—Your character as a man of business is unblemished, and your integrity stands clear; but if ye struggle on, you will be reduced to expedients that will ruin both, and you must break at last, amidst a fearful outcry of deluded creditors."

Charles made no reply; taking up his books, he immediately retired, and Wylie made no attempt to appease the feelings with which he was evidently troubled. But as soon as Pierston had left the house, he went directly to the Marquis of Avonside. "My lord," said he, "I'm come to ask a small favour of your lordship—a friend of mine has five thousand pounds to lend at common interest, and I have been thinking, as your lordship will in a manner be obligated to take on something against the expenses of the ensuing general election, this is an opportunity to get the money at an easy rate, the which, in my opinion, your lordship should not neglect."

The marquis bestowed liberal commendations on the forethought of his agent, and readily agreed to take the money. Some light and humorous conversation then followed, and after a reasonable time, Andrew rose to go away. In moving, however, across the floor, he paused suddenly, and said, "My lord marquis, there's a sma' matter in which I would be greatly obliged to your lordship. Sometimes, among my friends, there are young lads to be provided for, and it would really be a thing of a convenience to me, if your lordship could get a recommen-

putation put down in the minister's books, for a post under the government at home or abroad, the same to stand at my disposal. I'm no particular as to what it may be—only I would like it was something good, and likely to be soon forthcoming."

The marquis smiled, and cheerfully promised, saying, "I have sometimes thought, Wylie, that you have not turned the interest of your friends so well to account as you might do; and therefore, as this is the first favour you have ever requested of me, I must try to do the best I can, especially as you have asked for no particular appointment."

"That's very kind of your lordship," replied Andrew; "and your liberal patronage shall not flow upon any unworthy object."

The same evening, our hero received a note from the marquis, informing him that the minister, in the House of Lords, had promised him the nomination to a secretaryship in India, which was to be soon vacated. Charles Pierston was immediately sent for.

"Weel, Charlie," said Andrew, as he entered the room, "have you reflected on what I said to you in the morning?"

Charles replied that he had, and that he was extremely distressed and perplexed.

"I'm wae for that, man," said Andrew: "but better ken the warst at ance. Think weel on what I have counselled, for I can now say that an end to your perplexities, earned with a clear character, is the very best thing that can happen."

But Charles was swayed by a thousand indefinable feelings, and vacillated between shame and resolution. Andrew, however, without giving him the slightest intimation of what had taken place between himself and the marquis, had the satisfaction to see, before they parted for the night, that a tendency towards his opinion had begun to take place in the mind of Pierston. He, in consequence, refrained from urging him further, leaving the bias to work out its own effect; and in the course of a few days after, he had the satisfaction to receive a note from Charles, informing him that, sensible it was in vain to struggle any longer, he submitted to what really appeared to be his inevitable fate.

The prudence of this step was soon recognized by the creditors of Pierston; and in the shortest possible course of law, as a testimony of their respect for his manliness and honesty, they granted him an unanimous discharge. Charles brought it to Andrew, in some hope that perhaps he would then be induced to lend him the sum he had formerly solicited, to assist him to begin the world anew; but after looking at the document carefully, he said only, "Charlie, I'm very well pleased to see this, but I have a particular occasion to gang out just now, and ye maun excuse my leaving you."

The heart of Charles swelled within his bosom, and he turned aside, unable to speak, while his friend hastily quitted the room. There was perhaps some degree of cruelty in this proceeding: for our hero, having obtained the nomination to the Indian appointment, might have told him of that circumstance; but he recollected always the old proverb, that many things happen between the cup and the lip, and did not feel himself justified to encourage any hope which might be frustrated. He, however, on leaving the house, went to the marquis, and did not quit his lordship until he had got the nomination and appointment of Charles confirmed. The urgency with which he had pursued this object struck his lordship, and he rallied Wylie with all the wit of which he was master, on the supposed profit and advantage derived from the job.

"What your lordship says is very true," replied Andrew. "I'll no deny that it has been a good windfall; but the public, or I'm mista'en, will hae no reason to complain, for Mr Pierston is a man both of parts and principles. Indeed, had I no been fully persuaded of this, it would ne'er have entered my head to solicit the powerful help of your lordship's hand in his behalf."

We shall not attempt to describe what ensued, when Wylie informed his old companion of his appointment, as the sequel will show the feelings with which Pierston ever afterwards cherished the remembrance of the obligation thus conferred.

CHAPTER LXXII.

PATRIOTISM.

THE Marquis of Avonside, soon after he had procured the appointment for Pierston, received a confidential communication from one of his ministerial friends, relative to the dissolution of Parliament, by which his lordship was induced to send immediately for our hero, as his solicitor, to consult him with respect to the management of the borough of Bidfort, in which his lordship's influence was expected to be keenly contested. The noble marquis was one of the most disinterested supporters of his majesty's servants, as long as they enjoyed the confidence of their royal master; and perhaps, correctly speaking, he could not therefore be considered as a party man. His public conduct being regulated by what might be called the hereditary politics of his family, he had not found it profitable; indeed, to do him justice, he did not regard personal aggrandizement as at all a legitimate object even of his courtly patriotism. On the contrary, his estates were much encumbered by the consequences of his endeavours to preserve that political importance which his ancestors had always enjoyed in the state, and which was severely menaced by the rising influence of other more talented or wealthier families.

But not to meddle with such matters, which at present do not lie exactly in our way, our hero, on reaching the residence of the marquis, found his lordship alone; who, after a short preliminary conversation relative to the object in view, and the arrangements for a new mortgage, to enable him to carry on the election, said, "Now I think of it, Wylie; why don't you get into the House? I would as soon give my influence in Bidfort to you as to any man I know; not that I think you qualified to make any figure in debate, but there is a great deal of private and committee business, in which you are eminently fitted to take an able and an effectual part. I wish you would think of this; and if you are disposed to close with the offer, you shall have my interest for less than any other candidate."

The proposition did not meet an unprepared mind. From the time that our hero found he had risen to his natural level in society, the ambition to become a member of parliament had several times stirred in his fancy. He had actually formed the design of sounding his lordship on the subject; nevertheless, his characteristic prudence did not allow him to give a frank answer.

"I'm sure," said he, "that I'm greatly obliged to you, my lord, and what ye propose is a very friendly turn; but it's far from my hand to take a part in the great council o' the nation;—no that I think there are not bit's o' jobbies about the house wherein a bodie like me might mess and mell as weel as anither. But, my lord, ye know that your interest needs to be supported through thick and thin; and that I'm rather inclined to follow the politics o' my noble frien' the earl, your son-in-law, who is, as your lordship has lang complained, a dure hand with the Whigs."

The marquis was a little perplexed with this answer. It was not a negative, nor was it an assent, but implied something like an overture towards negotiation. His lordship, however, without committing himself, replied, "Of course, Mr Wylie, I should expect that in all public measures you would divide with my ministerial friends; but I should never think of tying you up on questions of speculative policy, except on Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. These are fixed points, and against these, your vote, be whosoever minister, I would hold pledged."

"Anent them, my lord, ye need be under no apprehension; for it's no to be expectit, as a thing in the course o' nature, that I would, in the first place, part wi' the stool that supported me; and, in the second, my conscience will never consent that I should be art or part to bring in the whore of Babylon among us, riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns. But what would your lordship expect, if it was proposed to the House to clip the wings o' that fat goose the Episcopalian establishment?"

"How!" cried his lordship in terror, "Touch the church, Mr Wylie! Are you in earnest? Why, that would be to pull down the state."

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"I didna say any thing about my touching the church. No, gude forgie me, I'm no for meddling wi' ony sic slippery blades as the clergy; I but put the thing by way o' a hypothesis; for in this age of innovation and change, it's no impossible that some o' the gabs o' the House will agitate the question; and what I would like to know is, whether, if the matter were to come to an issue, ye would expect me to vote for upholding the whole tot o' the establishment as it stands at present; or if it were proposed to reduce the tithes, and to give a portion of them to the state or to the landlord, which your lordship would prefer."

"Why," said the marquis, "I'm not apprehensive that any such question will come on. In the course of the present reign it would be hopeless; but, undoubtedly, were the attempt to be made, the landlord has the best right to the tithes."

"I had a notion that would be your lordship's opinion," replied Andrew. "But, my lord, as the tithes are the property o' the church, would it no be more natural for the members o' parliament, who, like me, have no land, to take a portion of the tithes to themselves, than to give them to the landlords?"

The marquis was puzzled, and could not see the drift of our hero's observations.

"Howsever," continued Andrew, "I think, wi' your lordship, that it's no a question very probable to be debated for some time yet; only it was necessary that I should ascertain what was the bearing o' your lordship's mind on such concerns; and noo that I clearly understand your lordship's representatives are no to vote for reformation, nor for Catholic emancipation; and that, if the question of church spoliation comes on, they are to vote for the behoof of the landlords, we may come to the point about the borough. What's the price your lordship would expect, if I agree to come in for your lordship, tied neck and heel to your lordship's ministerial friends?"

The marquis winced a little at the plainness of this language, but he could not refrain from smiling. "Why," said he, "if you come in for one of my close boroughs, you shall have it for three thousand five hundred. I will give it to no one else for less than four thousand; and there is a recent Indian importa-

tion that will give me even more; but he is a talking fellow, and I like all my friends to work well, and say nothing."

"Really that's a great temptation, my lord; and I think we might come to a conclusion, if your lordship would just gang a wee thought ajee, to let my conscience hae room to slip cannily out and in when it's a straight case."

"Upon that head," replied the marquis, "we shall not differ, I dare say. You are a sensible man, and I would trust as much to your discretion in politics, as to any gentleman's that I happen to know; but the government must be supported."

"My Lord Avonside," said our hero, with great seriousness of manner, "My Lord Avonside, I trust and hope that no man can presume to suspect that I would not support the government?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie," replied his lordship; "I never called in question the soundness of your principles; and I think the proposition which I have made to bring you into parliament, is a proof of the respect in which I hold them."

"I am sure your lordship has no reason to think otherwise of my politics, than as those of a man endeavouring throughout life to act an honest part; and therefore I am only grieved, wishing, as I do, to avail myself of your lordship's kind offer, that you should think of requiring from me any pledge or promise as to the way I shall vote; for that's a vera great impediment to my accepting the favour your lordship wishes to do me."

"To be plain with you, Wylie, I do not require any thing more from you than from those other gentlemen whom I send into parliament. It is a necessary preliminary that the understanding on which I lend them my interest, should be clear and explicit."

"Nae dout of that; the money should be regularly paid, and the nature o' the bargain perfectly understood. But that your lordship may not hae cause to be chided about any change in your system," replied Andrew dryly, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Ye know what my principles are, my lord; and out of a friendship which I canna express my pride o', ye would send me into parliament for five hundred pounds less than any ither body—

fast bound to your lordship's ministerial friends in a' debates. Noo, my lord, if ye'll consent to let me gang in free, I'll stand the contest in Bidfort at my own expense, whate'er the cost may be, the which will be both honourable to your lordship and me."

"You are a strange mortal," said his lordship laughing; "and I cannot but agree to your proposal. I hope, nevertheless, you will not disappoint my confidence in your ministerial principles."

"I trust your lordship's ministerial friends will no gie me ony cause to mak your lordship rue the bargain."

Such were the preliminaries that led to our hero's return to parliament. But there were certain circumstances connected with his election too important to be omitted; especially as Minerva, in the shape of the old gipsy woman, facilitated his return, perhaps, with more effect than some of the more consequential and ostensible agents.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

AN ELECTION.

Soon after Andrew had publicly announced his intention to stand for Bidfort, the grateful gipsies made their appearance before his house, and the old woman claimed admission.

"Weel, lucky," said our hero, as the footman showed her in, "whar are ye come from, and what's your will wi' me noo?"

"I have come to thank you again, and to serve you, for the kindness you have done to me and mine," replied the gipsy respectfully.

"Na, na, honest woman, ye canna bide here. I hae nae need of your servitude—I hae ouer mony in the house already," was the answer.

At which the old woman smiled, and said, "I come not, sir, to ask to share your fee or your fire; but to offer what skill I

have to help your fortunes." And she looked at him some time, with a queer and sly expression of curiosity; and then seating herself unbidden in a chair, opposite to where he was sitting, said, "You have hests in hand that I may further. Try my art. Seek you to stand in presence of the king? Would you thrive in some fair lady's love? There are paths through the thicket that the gipsies know—trust my guidance."

When the old woman had made this tender of her services, she sat for some time silent; and Wylie, meditating for two or three minutes on what she had said, then addressed her to the following effect:—"I'll tell you what, gudewife, ye maunna try to cast your glammer ower me. Ye have heard that I'm a candidate for Bidfort, so none o' your slights to beguile me with false hopes."

The old woman made no reply for some time to this; but sat in evident cogitation, and once or twice lifted the forefinger of her left hand suddenly to her lips, as if actuated by some quick internal impulse. She then raised herself erectly, as if fully prepared for the disclosure of some important result of her meditations.

"We know," said she, "how to bend the mind to love, and to unroot the weed of hate, and plant the rose of kindness in its stead. By the same art we'll work for you; and tide whatever may betide, you'll find in the end that we can do you service. What's your electioneering colour to be?"

"Orange and true blue, to be sure; the Protestant ascendancy, and the Hanoverian succession."

The old woman immediately rose, and, without saying a word, left the room. Before our hero could recover his surprise, she was out at the street-door. The servants, who observed her hurry away, ran up to see that she had stolen nothing; and were some time in answering their master's bell, who rung to order her some refreshment.

The rest of the gipsies, who were lingering for their ancestress in the neighbouring streets, as soon as she made her appearance, rallied around her; and soon after they at once set off for Bidfort.

At the entrance of the town, in a lone country lane leading

to the common, they pitched their camp under a hedge; and while the men travelled the borough, the grandfather with his wheel to sharpen knives and razors, and his son with audible proposals to make horn-spoons, the old woman went from house to house, to see if the inmates had any old china to clasp, or rush-bottomed chairs to mend. The young woman begged with her infant; and the boy and urchin, with a basket filled with pedlar trumpery, plied about the market-place. This basket they had purchased on their way from London; and the principal articles which it contained consisted of small knots of orange and blue riband, and stay-laces made of twisted tapes of the same colours. Upon this device the grateful gipsies had expended a considerable part of the money which had been given them on the day of trial, and which they had till this time carefully preserved.

The gipsy boys, with great archness and merry roguery, so recommended their orange and true-blue love-knots and trinkets to the females and children, and sold them so temptingly cheap, that they were soon disposed of. Whenever his grandmother saw any of them in a house, she assumed her mystical looks, and said, "Orange betokens gold, and blue a true heart; the blessing of both be upon you."

For two or three days, in this manner, they seemed to be plying their wonted vocations; and when an opportunity presented itself, each of the party recommended the other as a skilful fortune-teller: the preference, however, was always given to the age and experience of the ancestress, who, to all her customers, predicted great riches, and honour, and happy days, from "a little man from out the north, with smooth round cheeks, and small eyes, clothed in orange and blue." The consequence of which was, that every maiden looked northward in her dreams for a lover of this description; and the imagination of every one in the town was unconsciously tinctured with an affection for ideas of orange and blue.

At last, the predetermined dissolution of parliament, after all the friends of the ministers had got the start of their adversaries, was disclosed to the public. The highways resounded with chariots and horsemen; and the public-houses in every borough

became the humming hives of patriotism, to the immediate benefit of the excise, which is perhaps the only part of the state that derives any immediate advantage from a general election.

Our hero and his friends having the ministerial advantage of starting before the patriotic nabob who opposed him, entered the borough in a barouche and four, all superbly decorated with large knots of orange and blue, and he required no herald to proclaim him. The gipsy's prediction had already disclosed him in vision; every eye at once recognized him, and he was received with universal acclamations, in which something even like a sentiment of superstitious reverence was mingled; inasmuch, that, when the nabob arrived, the whole town was like a bed of summer flowers, all orange and blue; and "the little man from out the north" was, although on the ministerial interest, so decidedly the popular favourite, that his rival at once gave up the contest, and retired from the field.

The gipsies, immediately after the new member had been chaired, presented themselves at his inn; and the old woman, with triumph and exultation, explained to him, in her wild way, the metaphysical aid which she had given to him in the election.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A ROYAL RESIDENCE.

Our hero was perfectly aware, that by his political connexion with the Marquis of Avonside, it would be necessary for him to appear early at court; indeed, the marquis, immediately on his return to parliament, intimated as much, and that he would himself introduce him to the king.

Curiosity held a very subordinate station in the mind of Wylie; and it so happened, that it had never prompted him to seek a sight of majesty. Though moving in the higher circles of fashionable life, it could not be said that he had even acquired any knowledge of the private and personal character of George

the immediate part of the state general election. al advantage of d him, entered decorated with ed no herald to y disclosed him he was received ng even like a ed; insomuch, a: like a bed of little man from ial interest, so t once gave up

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the Third. The retirement of the royal family to Windsor had, indeed, rendered the king, in some degree, a stranger to his people; and, except on public occasions, levees, and drawing-rooms, his majesty was rarely seen by them, but on the Sunday evenings on the terrace of the castle.

Experience had taught Wylie, that some previous acquaintance with the peculiarities and characteristics of persons whom he had occasion to know, was of great consequence to a successful issue of whatever he might have to do with them; and an introduction at court, so generally considered merely as a ceremonial, was to him an event to which he rightly attached much importance. He had been raised to that rank in life which made it, in some degree, indispensable; and it was not now beyond the range of ordinary probabilities, that he might one day be brought into actual intercourse with his sovereign. It was therefore, in his opinion, requisite that he should be able so to conduct himself at the first interview, as not to leave any awkward or unfavourable impression. But to accomplish this required equal address and prudence; and it was a matter too delicate, even for the counsel of friendship; for its object and purpose could not be disclosed without divulging some of those nebulous and anticipating guesses, with respect to the chances of the future—those reveries of ambition, which are seldom of a form so definite as to bear discussion. The Earl of Sandyford was the only one of his friends on whose judgment, in a matter of this sort, he would have placed any reliance: but although he justly admired his lordship's acute perception, and delicacy of tact, he yet so dreaded his raillery, that he was deterred from consulting him; and therefore, after weighing the subject well in his own mind, he resolved to go secretly to Windsor, and gather on the spot as much information as possible, about the habits, the manners, and true character of the king.

Accordingly, at the hour when the Windsor afternoon coach usually leaves the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, he was there, and took his place in a corner, shrinking from observation, lest any friend should accidentally pass, and question him respecting his excursion—a thing, by the way, that has happily rather gone out of fashion. Only country friends or Edinburgh advocates in

town on appeal cases, ever think of either asking or wondering what their acquaintance can be doing in stage-coaches.

In this journey our senator met with no adventure, although three Eton boys, that were already playing at swells on the outside, once or twice attempted to quiz him. He was, however, their match, and by the end of the journey they were become jocose and familiar acquaintance. He learned from them that the Castle Tavern was one of the best inns in Windsor; and one of the boys said, "that, if he had no particular objection, they would call on him next day, and help him to ascertain what sort of wine was in the cellar."

"I can hae no objection," replied he slyly, "to receive any civility at your hands; and if ye're disposed to treat me to a bottle o' the best o't, I'll e'en make an endeavour to do justice to your kindness."

And with this they parted. The cubs were left at their dame's door, where their fags were in obsequious attendance to receive their great-coats, and to do their hests with an obedience as implicit as that with which Ariel served Prospero, while our hero, driven over the bridge and up the hill, was set down at the Castle Tavern.

After taking tea in the coffee-room, which he did expressly for the purpose of asking questions at the waiter relative to the localities, he went to inspect the environs of the royal residence, and to see with what sort of external parade the actual abode of royalty was invested. His ideas on this subject were either not very clear, or very erroneous; for he was chilled, we might almost say awed, by the monastic silence which lingered in the wards and courts, except where the footfalls of the sentinels were heard, as the soldiers themselves, sympathizing with the presiding genius of the place, performed their brief and narrow circuits before the different entrances, without exchanging a sentence; or where two or three of the small band of stone-cutters, employed in repairing the dilapidations of the towers and cornices, were heard chipping at their tasks in equal solemnity. He had expected to see steeds prancing and colours flying, and to hear drums beating and trumpets sounding, amidst the flourish, bustle, and pageantry, which he had supposed essential to the palace

and court of an old and mighty monarchy. But an extreme simplicity, dignified only by the circumstances of antiquity with which it was associated, every where prevailed. The broad and gorgeous folds of the royal standard on the round tower, as it pompously and slowly floated on the summer breeze to the setting sun, was the only suitable ensign of present sovereignty that met his view.

It was too late in the evening then to see the apartments, but he resolved to do so early in the morning; not, however, with the slightest intention of looking either at the works of art with which they are adorned, or to listen to the traditional stories of the servants appointed to show them. His object was to address himself to some one of the domestics, in the course of passing through the different halls and chambers, and so to lead into a conversation that might enable him to extract some authentic information respecting the real object of his visit. His enquiries that night were, therefore, chiefly regarding the times and modes of obtaining admission into the apartments, and when, where, and how, he could see the royal family to most advantage.

His walk round the castle, and his enquiries of the persons he incidentally met with, filled up his time till it was dark, and he had no Shakspearian recollections to allure him into the Park when the moon rose. On the contrary, a most prosaic belief, that if he continued lingering there much beyond candle-lighting time, he might meet with nocturnal questioners more substantial than fairies, and quite as mischievous as those who played such pranks on Sir John Falstaff, induced him to retire early to the inn, by which he lost the beautiful and romantic effect of the view of the castle by moonlight—a view which every one who has the slightest taste for the picturesque, ought neither to go abroad nor to die without seeing.

CHAPTER LXXV.

WINDSOR PARK.

By sunrise on the Sunday morning Wylie was brushing the early dew in the little park, to taste the freshness of the morning gale, or, as he himself better expressed it, to take a snuff of caller air on the brow of the hill. But healthful exercise was not his only reason for being so soon abroad; it occurred to him in the watches of the night, that as his majesty was an early riser, the household too would of course be stirring with the cock; and that some of them might be more readily met with at that time than later in the morning. Accordingly, he kept a sharp look-out on all sides as he strolled through the park; but he saw only a solitary laundress, with a basket of linen on her head, going to the town, and three or four lumpish country boys that came whistling along the footpath from Datchet, in their clod shoes, with white cotton stockings, and the knees of their new velveteen breeches shown in front beneath clean smock-frocks; the tails of which, behind, were tucked up to show their Sunday coats.

Somewhat disappointed, but thinking he was still too early for the inmates of a palace, he prolonged his walk towards the meadows; and in stepping over a stile, he saw, close before him, a stout and tall elderly man, in a plain blue coat, with scarlet cuffs and collar, which at first he took for a livery. There was something, however, in the air of the wearer, which convinced him that he could not be a servant; and an ivory-headed cane, virled with gold, which he carried in a sort of negligent poking manner, led him to conclude that he was either an old officer, or one of the poor knights of Windsor; for he had added to his learning, in the course of the preceding evening, a knowledge of the existence of this appendage to the noble Order of the Garter. "This," said the embryo courtier to himself, "is just the vera thing that I hae been seeking. I'll mak up to this decent carle; for nae dout he's weel acquaint with n' about

the king," and he stepped alertly forward. But before he had advanced many paces, the old gentleman turned round, and seeing a stranger, stopped; and looking at him for two or three seconds, said to himself, loud enough, however, to be heard, "Strange man—don't know him—don't know him;" and then he paused till our hero had come up.

"Gude-day, sir," said Wylie as he approached; "ye're early a-fit on the Sabbath morning; but I'm thinking his majesty, honest man, sets you a' here an example of sobriety and early rising."

"Scotchman, eh!" said the old gentleman; "fine morning, fine morning, sir—weather warmer here than with you? What part of Scotland do you come from? How do you like Windsor? Come to see the king, eh?" and loudly he made the echoes ring with his laughter.

The senator was a little at a loss which question to answer first; but delighted with the hearty freedom of the salutation, jocularly said, "It's no easy to answer so many questions all at once; but if ye'll no object to the method, I would say that ye guess right, sir, and that I come from the shire of Ayr."

"Ah, shire of Ayr!—a fine country that—good farming there—no smuggling now among you, eh?—No excisemen shooting lords now?—Bad game, bad game. Poor Lord Eglinton had a true taste for agriculture; the county, I have heard, owes him much.—Still improving?—Nothing like it.—The war needs men—Corn is our dragon's teeth—Potatoes do as well in Ireland, eh?"

The humour of this sally tickled our hero as well as the author of it, and they both laughed themselves into greater intimacy.

"Well; but, sir," said Andrew, "as I'm only a stranger here, I would like to ask you a question or two about the king, just as to what sort of a man he really is; for we can place no sort of dependence on newspapers or history books, in matters anent rulers and men of government."

"What! like Sir Robert Walpole—not believe history?—Scotchmen very cautious." But the old gentleman added, in a graver accent, "The king is not so good as some say to him he

is; nor is he so bad as others say of him. But I know that he has conscientiously endeavoured to do his duty, and the best men can do no more, be their trusts high or low."

"That, I believe, we a' in general think; even the blacknebs never dispute his honesty, though they undervalue his talents. But what I wish to know and understand, is no wi' regard to his kingly faculties, but as to his familiar ways and behaviour—the things in which he is like the generality of the world."

"Ha!" said the stranger briskly, relapsing into his wonted freedom, "very particular, very particular, indeed. What reason, friend, have you to be so particular?—Must have some?—People never so without reason."

"Surely, sir, it's a very natural curiosity for a subject to enquire what sort of a man the sovereign is, whom he has sworn to honour and obey, and to bear true allegiance with hand and heart."

"True, true, true!" exclaimed the old gentleman—"Just remark—Come on business to England?—What business?"

"My chie' business, in truth, sir, at present here, is to see and learn something about the king. I have no other turn in hand at this time."

"Turn, turn!" cried the stranger perplexed—"What turn?—Would place the king on your lathe, eh?"

Our hero did not well know what to make of his quick and versatile companion; and while the old gentleman was laughing at the jocular turn which he had himself given to the Scotticism, he said, "I'm thinking, friend, ye're commanded no to speak with strangers anent his majesty's conduct; for ye blink the question, as they say in parliament."

"Parliament!—Been there?—How do you like it?—Much cry and little wool among them, eh?"

"Ye say Gude's truth, sir; and I wish they would make their speeches as short and pithy as the king's. I'm told his majesty has a very gracious and pleasant delivery," replied our hero pawkily; and the stranger, not heeding his drift, said, with simplicity—

"It was so thought when he was young; but he is now an old man, and not what I have known him."

"I suppose," replied our hero, "that you have been long in his service?"

"Yes, I am one of his oldest servants. Ever since I could help myself," was the answer, with a sly smile, "I may say I have been his servant."

"And I dinna dout," replied the senator, "that you have had an easy post."

"I have certainly obeyed his will," cried the stranger in a lively laughing tone; but changing into a graver, he added—"But what may be my reward, at least in this world, it is for you and others to judge."

"I'm mista'en, then, if it shouldna be liberal," replied Andrew, "for ye seem a man of discretion; and, doubtless, merit the post ye have so long possessed. Maybe some day in parliament I may call this conversation to mind for your behoof. The king canna gang far wrang sae lang as he keeps counsel with such dounce and prudent-like men, even though ye hae a bit flight of the fancy. What's your name?"

The old gentleman looked sharply; but in a moment his countenance resumed its wonted open cheerfulness, and he said, "So you are in parliament, eh?—I have a seat there too—Don't often go, however—Perhaps may see you there—Good-by, good-by."

"Ye'll excuse my freedom, sir," said Andrew, somewhat rebuked by the air and manner in which his new acquaintance separated from him; "but if you are not better engaged, I would be glad if we could breakfast together."

"Can't, can't," cried the old gentleman shortly, as he walked away; but turning half round, after he had walked two or three paces, he added, "Obliged to breakfast with the king—he won't without me;" and a loud and mirthful laugh gave notice to all the surrounding echoes that a light and pleased spirit claimed their blithest responses.

There was not much in this conversation that satisfied our hero, who perceived that it was no easy matter to gain the sort of knowledge which he had come on purpose to procure; and in the irksome humour which this reflection produced, he consumed the morning, loitering in the park and about the castle, till his usual breakfast hour, when he returned to the inn.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

A LEVEE.

DURING breakfast in the coffee-room, Andrew learned from some of the other strangers, who were similarly employed, that the best opportunity of seeing the royal family was when they went and came from church; for it was not always certain that they would walk on the terrace in the evening.

"But," said he, "how am I to know the king? for I dinna suppose that his arms are like twa wild beasts, the lion and the unicorn. However, I'll avail myself of your counselling, and tak my stance, as ye advise, at the royal entrance to St George's Chapel."

Accordingly, at the proper time he was at the place; but the moment that the carriage with their majesties drew up, he saw the old gentleman whom he had met in the park alone with the queen. His heart sank within him at the sight, and he fled abashed and confounded; for he discovered that it was the king himself, and he shrunk with alarm at the liberties he had taken.

The terrors of this idea, however, abated as he returned to London; and when he recalled to recollection all that had passed, he was satisfied his majesty was not likely to be displeased with him. By the time he reached home, he could, indeed, scarcely refrain from smiling at the adventure, when he thought how completely he had succeeded in the object of his excursion, at the very time when he was despairing of any success.

As the levee was to be held at St James's in the course of the week, on the following morning the marquis called to remind him that he was to be presented.

Andrew made something like an attempt to decline this honour, in the hope that, by postponing it to a distant day, his majesty might in the interim forget him; saying, "I dout, my lord marquis, it winna be in my power to go to court that day. I have a great fike o' matters in hand, concerning causes that are to be tried at the next term, and really I would fain postpone it for a season."

"That cannot be," replied his lordship seriously. "It is not only expected that all my parliamentary friends should show themselves at court, but be regular in their attendance."

"I hope, my lord, that your lordship doesna consider this indispensable; for ye know a professional man cannot command his time, if he would serve his clients with that fidelity which, I hope, your lordship and all mine have ever found I have tried to the best of my ability to do."

"But the public must also be served, and men in public situations must consider that. I therefore expect you will be ready to go with me to St James's," replied the marquis.

"If your lordship makes a point o't, of consequence I maun yield. But really I did not think that there was any great serving o' the public by melting in a crowd at a levee."

"Mr Wylie," said the marquis gravely, I thought you had a more correct notion of these sort of things. In what way can the public interests be more effectually promoted, than by a regular and dutiful attendance on the monarch? Does it not inspire the people with that awe and veneration, which is due from them to the first person in the state? In these times, when the Jacobin principles of anarchy are so widely disseminated, it requires the most strenuous efforts, on the part of all men who have a stake in the country, to uphold the constitution in its original purity, of king, lords, and commons. For my part, were it not for a most devout persuasion of the utility of carrying my homage to the foot of the throne, I would never breathe the air of the court, for I have no natural taste for it. But, Mr Wylie, when I reflect on the distinguished part that my family have always taken in public affairs—in no instance, from the earliest periods, have any of the Spangles been found deficient in their attachment to the monarchy; having uniformly for ages, through many changes, revolutions, and transfers of the dynasty, been always found by the side of their sovereign—a systematic line of policy which has secured them at all times, even in the rudest and most turbulent, from the vicissitudes that have attended the more versatile members of the baronage."

"I am very sensible of the eminent part that your lordship, like your forefathers of great renown, has played in politics; and

no one can be more impressed than me with the honour of being taken by the hand, and led into the presence, by a nobleman of your lordship's courtesy," replied Andrew; "but my objection was not to the action, but only to the time, having, as I said, a power of important causes in hand, coming on at the approaching term."

"The introduction will not occupy more than two or three hours," replied the marquis; "and when you have been presented, you may go as often after as you please; for his majesty possesses the extraordinary faculty of retaining the most perfect recollection of every body that he has once seen."

"Ah!" exclaimed our hero.

"My dear friend," said the marquis soothingly, "I hope it is not a twinge of the gout?" and his lordship immediately mentioned a medicine which he had often himself taken with the most beneficial effects.

To this kindly sympathy, leaving, however, his lordship to imagine that the pang, which occasioned the interjection of anguish, might have sprung from the gout, Andrew made the best answer he could; and the marquis went away with an understanding that the new member was to accompany him to the next levee.

When the day arrived, our hero, for the first time in his life, was irritable and fretful. His new court suit of dark brown, in his opinion, neither fitted, nor was it of a proper sobriety of appearance. "The spurtle," as he peevishly called the sword, he thought would have hung more commodiously at the right than the left side. Every thing, in a word, teased him; and he banned the marquis for his perjinketies more than fifty times before he was equipped.

He delayed going to his lordship as long as possible, in order to allow the crowd time to fill the rooms before they could reach the palace; his intention being to hasten past the king in the throng, and so to avoid any particular observation. The marquis, when he arrived, was almost as much out of humour as himself, declaring that he had never been so late of going to the levee before.

On reaching the palace, Andrew kept in the wake of his

lordship, from the moment that they ascended the great staircase. To his short figure he trusted much; also something to his nimbleness when he should approach the king; and indeed he so managed, that, by lowly crooking his knee at the presentation, and cowering down his head, averting his face at the same time, he had almost escaped the quick eye of royalty; but in the very moment when he was endeavouring to slink in behind the puckered form of a corpulent church-dignitary, he was caught in the fact, and instantly recognized by the king.

"Ha! ha!" cried his majesty; "fine morning, shire of Ayr! — Come to see the king, eh? Come to see the king?"

Our hero, seeing there was no retreating, instantly mustered courage; and calculating on his knowledge of the king's familiar humour, said, "Ah! 'twas a soople trick o' your majesty to delve a' out of me, and never to give me an inkling of who I was speaking to."

The Marquis of Avonside was petrified, and stood aghast; while the king, laughing heartily, amused by the recollection of his own address, and pleased with the compliment which Andrew had so dexterously applied, continued speaking,—*"Could not breakfast with you that morning, eh! But one good turn deserves another. What turn in hand now?"* and in saying these words, his Majesty briskly addressed himself to a northern nobleman, then high in his confidence and favour, and said, *"Your countryman, my lord—'deevilish cunning,' as Sir Archy says; but an honest man—honest man—noblest work of God!"*

Andrew availed himself of this ellipsis in his majesty's discourse to hasten on, while some other person, to whom the king had also something jocular to say, appeared in sight, and drew off the royal attention from the new courtier.

The marquis was most seriously indignant when he afterwards rejoined our hero, in their way to his lordship's carriage; assuring him that he had run the greatest possible risk of meeting a most ungracious reception. But Lord Sandford, when informed of the adventure, declared that he should not be surprised if our hero were to rival his famous countryman in the royal favour. Nor was this opinion improbable; for immediately after the next drawing-room, where he was again most

cordially recognized by the king, he received an invitation to one of the queen's parties at Buckingham-house, at which his majesty requested him to come down to Windsor.

But history, when she records the cause which prevented our hero from being able to avail himself of the royal condescension, will change her smiles at the innocent foibles and artless jocularity of George the Third; and with a generous eloquence, rising into all her dignity, will describe the constancy of his virtues, the true English simplicity of his character, the fortitude of his public principles, and the purity of his private worth.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE SPIRIT OF IMPROVEMENT.

NEITHER the east nor the west of Scotland affords the best market for the disposal of beautiful young ladies with large fortunes. We have even some doubts whether those of the south or the north be any better. Certain it is, that although Mary Cunningham was, in all human probability, one of the finest and fairest of the "Ayrshire lasses," and surpassed by few in the prospects of fortune, she continued, during the regular advancement of our hero, still to bloom unplucked upon the parent spray. She had, doubtless, a due portion of the homage of tender glances, and of sordid proposals; but in the sequestered bower to which she was confined by the mingled spell of her father's indolence and her aunt's pride and prudence, no acceptable youth had obtained a proper clue to conduct him to her presence or affections. For, saving at the annual papingo ball at Kilwinning, she was rarely seen beyond the boundaries of the Craiglands. One season, indeed, after her return from Edinburgh, and when the renewal of a lease of one of the farms had brought a considerable augmentation to her father's income, her aunt had influence enough to induce the laird to treat them with the pleasures of the Ayr races, where Mary was universally

admired, especially by the dashing officers of Lord Darlington's cavalry, at that time encamped in the neighbourhood, and who, like military men in general, thought as much of a rich heiress as a great beauty. But the circumspect Miss Mizy had a well-founded apprehension of the occasional demonstrations of the military, and always drew her niece as far as possible from the scene of danger. In truth, Mary herself did not seem to be particularly interested by the accomplishments or understanding of any of those Yorkshire heroes of the unblemished sabre. But this was not to be wondered at, when we consider that those characteristics of intellectual superiority which have enabled the possessors to perform such miracles both abroad and at home, we mean mustaches, had not then been revived in the British army.

The jaunt to Ayr was in consequence productive of no event; and Mary, after enjoying the social sunshine and gayeties of the race-week, was conducted back to the dull monotony of that monastic seclusion which she was fated to lead at the Craighlands.

A few of the county bachelors now and then called, and sometimes looked as if they could woo; but they were all either too well-stricken in years, or cast in too clumsy a mould, without any redeeming grace of mind, to gain on the affections of a spirited and elegant girl, who was not entirely unconscious of her charms.

We have been thus particular in describing the situation of Miss Cunningham, because we have some reason to suspect that her case is not a solitary one; and also, because it was necessary to explain how Fate worked, in the mean time, to keep the possessor of so much beauty, and with such affluence in reversion, almost neglected and unknown, while she was performing such prodigies to increase the fortune and augment the personal consideration of her lover.

But although Mary was thus destined to bloom like a rose in a conservatory, her days neither passed in indolence nor without enjoyment. Her education at Edinburgh had been skilfully conducted; and during her short visit to London, she had obtained a view of the world, from which her imagination easily enabled her to form a distinct and clear conception of its general out-

lines and bearings. Her taste, in consequence, found employment in superintending the restoration of the pleasure grounds of the Craiglunds; and her address an object in obtaining from the narrow ideas of her father, with respect to the importance of such things, the requisite funds to defray the expense. In this business she became insensibly and unconsciously a blessing to the village of Stoneyholm; for the old men found easier occupation in trimming the walks and lawns, than in hedging, and ditching, and the statute-labour of the highways. She lightened their tasks; and it is only by so doing that the rich can wisely assist the poor; for toil is their inheritance, and all that the well regulated spirits among them ever covet, is employment suitable to their strength.

It was thus, under the auspices of Miss Cunningham, that the genial influence of that improving genius, with which the whole kingdom was at the time animated, took effect in the native village of our hero—and he was not long uninformed of the change; for the master, regularly at the bottom of the letters which he wrote to him for his grandmother, mentioned from himself whatever occurred at Stoneyholm; and the taste and benevolence of Mary were the subjects which, unaware of their interest, he seemed most to delight in celebrating. “It is,” said the amiable Tannyhill in one of those double epistles, “a wonder and pleasure to behold the beautifulness that’s kithing around the place—where Miss Mary, after a great work, has got the laird not only to white-wash the walls of the house, but to do a reparation to the dykes, that has made it no longer like the sluggard’s garden, which it was wont to be. She has even persuaded him to get two lead rones, with fine gilded whirlgig tops to them, such as no man in this country-side remembers to have seen, for they came all the way out of Glasgow; and I was obligated to give the school the play when the plumbers came to set them up. Over and above all the good that she has done in this way, making the walks paths of pleasantness indeed, the redding up of the Craiglunds has had a manifest effect in the way of example among ourselves, and we have several new houses bigging;—among others, there is some talk of taking down your grannie’s, which she’s a thought fashed at, having

been so long her home, and would rather bide in it as it is, than flit to a better, which she is well enabled to do, out of your dutiful kindness."

Whatever satisfaction our hero derived from these epistles, this one was not entirely without alloy. He remembered with delight the innocent hours that he had spent in the old cottage; and regretted so much that it was likely to be removed before his return, that by the next post he wrote to Mr Tannyhill to offer any price for it and the garden, rather than it should be changed or destroyed. The master was delighted with this agency, and lost no time in effecting the purchase; but he was so eager that he gave no less than five-and-twenty pounds, being, in the opinion of every other inhabitant of the village, full five pounds more than the whole property was worth.

Our hero having thus become landlord of the cottage, then instructed his exulting agent to see that it was put into the most perfect state of repair, without altering, in any degree, its appearance; and likewise to add at the back a small room, "which must," as Andrew said in his letter, "be in a better fashion, with a deal floor, in case grannie was taking any ailment, or I could find time and opportunity to see my old friends; for I would not like to vex her by taking up my lodging in another dwelling."

This hint begat an expectation that Andrew would probably soon visit Stoneyholm; but when it was known there that he was elected a member of parliament, the hope was abandoned; and yet the master continued to declare that he could see no change which the elevation had produced in his letters; "for they continue," said he, "as leal-hearted as ever."

Old Martha herself did not rightly understand in what the dignity consisted; but said, "I hope it's no ill, nor ony thing about the court, where a' sin and corruption abounds. Indeed, I needna be feared o' that, for Andrew; poor fallow, was ne'er cut out for prancing on skeigh horses, or gieing the word o' command to rampaging dragoons, and men of renown, that are proud and mighty in battle."

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

POLITICS.

DURING the winter after our hero's election, and before the meeting of parliament, Lord and Lady Sandyford came to town, much, however, against their own wishes. But his lordship had been persuaded by some of his old friends, public characters whom he esteemed, that he ought to resume his duty as a peer.

On this occasion the Marquis of Avonside, who, in all things, was a conscientious observer of forms, deemed it necessary, soon after their arrival, to issue cards for a splendid party, in order to exhibit them in their state of reunion to the friends of his family. Among the nobility invited, both as a matter of course, and from a wish to bring Lord Riversdale again forward in public life, were several members of the ministry. But the viscount had predetermined never to form any political connexion; and when made acquainted with the names and titles of the expected guests, almost resolved to leave London for a time, rather than be present; although the occasion was one which his father endeavoured to convince him involved, in many respects, the honour of his sister. How it should have been supposed to do so, we have never properly understood. At the same time, he agreed with the marquis, that a general congregation of all the leading members of the Avonside and Sandyford families was a fitting and expedient manner of showing to the world the satisfaction with which the reconciliation was considered. Before, however, finally deciding as to the part he would perform, Lord Riversdale went to Sandyford House, to consult the earl on the subject, and, on being shown into the library, found his lordship sitting with our hero.

After some general observations as to the state of the weather, the prelude to all business between Englishmen, except when they meet at Chalk Farm, or any other ultimatum of honour—on these occasions, we believe it is not according to etiquette to criticize the appearance of the morning—Lord Riversdale mentioned to the earl his embarrassment at the idea of renewing his

acquaintance with the statesmen alluded to, adding, that nothing but his regard for Lady Sandysford and his lordship would induce him for a moment to hesitate.

The earl rather pitied the sensitive viscount than respected him; for he could discern beneath his extreme delicacy of sentiment, much of the hereditary weakness of the marquis, his father, and used indeed to say that Riversdale's fine sense of political virtue was but a cutaneous irritation of the mind. However, he listened to him with great gravity, and when the viscount had made an end of his case, he put on a face of serious consideration, and then said—"In a matter of such importance, I am not, my dear lord, qualified to give you any advice; for, never having been a decided political character myself, being, indeed, almost in doubt whether I am now considered as belonging to the ministerial or opposition side of the House, I cannot enter into your feelings; but I dare say our friend, the member here, may be able to understand the importance of so grave a question."

"I should never once have thought of speaking to him," replied the viscount querulously; "for going into the House under my father's auspices, he has, of course, linked himself to his lordship's party, and will, no doubt, be as anxious to strengthen their number and influence as the marquis himself."

Lord Sandysford smiled at this attack, and enjoyed the anticipation of a retort.

"'Deed my lord," cried our hero, "ye're all wrong. I came in on my own pock-nook, as we say in Scotland when a man lives on his own means—and I wish your lordship no to go away in the belief, that, as a member of parliament, I hold myself at the good-will of either prince or potentate, peer or prelate. It's true, I mean to uphold and assist the king and constitution, to the best of my judgment. But"—

"I beg your pardon, Mr Wylie, I meant no offence!" exclaimed Riversdale. "On public affairs, and the principles and characters of public men, every one is free to speak. You virtually, indeed, acknowledge yourself to be wedded to my father's party; and therefore I am justified in thinking that, like his lordship, you are naturally anxious to strengthen that party."

Lord Sandysford looked seriously at the member, apprehensive

that the morbid viscount had gone too far; but our hero, with a significant smile, re-established his confidence.

"It's very true," replied Wylie, "that I naturally wish to strengthen the influence of what you call my party; but the means of doing that lie in the common sense of the country at large. It's no to be done by votes of members, but by satisfying public opinion—which is the god of the political world. And, my Lord Riversdale, since ye think yoursel' a public man, and wasna blate in expressing what ye thought of me as another, alloo me to say, that I do not think my party would be strengthened by the like—I'll no say of you—but of any man who thinks himself privileged to indulge his own humours in the service of the commonweal, or no to serve it at all, just as the wind sits with him."

The earl, afraid that if he allowed the viscount to reply, the conversation would become still more acute, although he perceived that the member's resentment was satisfied in giving this rebuke, interposed, and said briskly, "I suspect, Wylie, that some part of your animadversions were levelled at me, who, among other derelictions, must reckon the slackened interest that I have for years taken in public affairs."

"As for that," replied Andrew laughing, "I never attached much importance to your lordship as a politician; for you are one of those who are naturally born to be in opposition."

"Born!" exclaimed the earl; "who ever heard of such philosophy?"

"I should be sorry if any sic blethers as philosophy were in what I mean. The world's made up of two sort of folk—men of deeds, and men of thought. The men of deeds have aye had the upper hand, and will keep it to the day of judgment; the men of thought are those that scheme, and those that find fault; and the ends and purposes of the men o' deeds, are to carry into effect the suggestions of the one under the correction of the other. Your lordship is no just one of the schemers, nor exactly a fault-finder, but ye're made up of the elements of both, and all your speculations would naturally make you an adversary to the men of deeds; and, of course, in opposition to those in authority and power."

"What says the Stagyrite on that, Riversdale?" said the earl, laughing. "By the shade of the mighty Julius, I have never heard half so good an account of the necessary and natural institution of a parliamentary opposition; and I am persuaded there is some truth in the theory. Indeed I never heard of a regular opposition-man that, in private life, was an agreeable man of business, however intelligent as such—a proof that he was deficient in some of those conciliatory business-qualities, which, in the management of public affairs, are of as much importance as talents. But Wylie, as, according to this notion of your's, if I am constrained by nature to be in opposition, even although not belonging decidedly either to the schemers or the fault-finders, I must of course be an inferior among them. You give me but sorry encouragement to re-enter the arena of public life."

"Your lordship," replied Andrew, with animation, "would make a very good king in a limited monarchy, where the constitution so works, that the sovereign has never the entire upper hand. But in any other post of power, I have my doubts that you would sometimes be gien to the breaking of old and sacred things, for the pleasure of mending them; and may be, now and then, trying the mouth of the horse, by pulling his bridle unnecessarily. No, my lord, ye're no qualified to shine as a statesman—I never thought it, since ye will have my opinion, though no one can mair admire your pleasant talents. Your mind is over fine for daily use; something coarser is wanted for the toil and moil, the jangling and the banter of public life; and your wisest way, as ye have no chance of being a king of the kind I was speaking anent, is to be the next thing till't. Settle yourself in the princely house of Chastington, with your leddy, and there, like two patriarchs, beget sons and daughters; and ye'll serve your country better in fostering the comforts of the tenantry around you, than hy a' the speeches that ye're able to speak, though ye were ten times better at the art than Pitt and Fox, and a' the rest of them carded through ither."

"Yes!" exclaimed Lord Sandford, surprised at the superiority thus assumed and felt, while he was amused at its simplicity—"Yes, my friend, you are right—I am not fit for public

life—I have been long conscious of the truth, and I will take your advice—I see its wisdom, and I obey its influence. So you see Riversdale, as there is no chance of the ministry charming you into their party, they are likely, by my abandoning the intention of re-entering parliament, to gain as much by this consultation, as if you were already spellbound to their services."

The viscount did not much relish the insinuation; but, struck with the remarks which had fallen from our hero, said, "I think, Mr Wylie, considering what has passed, you may tell me in which of your two great classes you place me. The result may be as decisive as with his lordship."

"I dinna think so," replied Wylie; "ye're no made of such malleable metal. But though I canna say just what ye are, knowing so little of you, I'll undertake to tell your fortune. When the marquis is a little mair failed, ye'll be called up to the House of Peers; and I'll no despair of hearing you move the address, in answer to the speech from the throne, in the first session after."

Lord Sandyford threw himself back in his chair, unable to control his laughter, while the astonished viscount changed colour.

"Look at his feet, Riversdale!" exclaimed the earl, "look at his feet! They must be cloven."

"Noo, an ye had the decision of character which the earl possesses," said Andrew, rising to take his leave, "ye would just at once, on this spot, not only resolve to take your place at your father's table, along with the ministers, but ask them, before they quit the house, to summon you to the peers, because ye dislike the coarse manners and the turbulent debates of the Commons. It will come with you to that at last, and there's no apostasy in't; for the French Revolution, that ye set out, as I have heard, with worshipping, has apostatized to such a degree, that the question is no longer, whether mankind are entitled to have liberty or equality, but whether they shall submit to a military despotism. When things are brought back to the state of the golden age of the Eighty-nine, ye may indulge your philanthropic politics. But till then, my lord, ye may, with a

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safe conscience, support any ministers in this country, that set themselves against the domineering insolence of a pack of licentious adventurers, that has no other object in view but to riot at Paris, like our own sailors at Portsmouth or Plymouth when they receive prize-money."

And with this the conversation and interview ended; for Riversdale came away at the same time with our hero, and as they walked down Lower Grosvenor Street, tried to convince him, that having once abandoned parliament, it would be inconsistent to take any part again in public life; to all which, Andrew only remarked, "Weel, weel, my lord; but make no rash vows, and think on what I was saying."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

A PLOT.

WHEN Lord Riversdale and our hero had retired from Sandyford House, the earl felt himself irresistibly inclined to play them both a little prank. Accordingly, he soon afterwards went to pay a morning visit to the marquis, with the view of ascertaining who were to be of his grand party.

"I am not sure," said his lordship, with affected seriousness, in conversing on the subject with the old peer, "that it will exactly do for me to meet so many of your ministerial friends. Your lordship knows that I have had some intention of resuming my parliamentary duties, and that I have always been considered as belonging to the Whig side of the House."

"That doubt," replied the marquis, with a complacent smile, "shows, indeed, to which side of the House your lordship belongs; for none of ours would ever think his character or principles likely to become questionable, by meeting in private life with even the most violent and distinguished of your leaders."

"Nay," said Lord Sandyford, "I had no doubts on the subject till Riversdale called this morning, evidently so much in a vacillating perplexity, that our friend Wylie advised him to ask the minister at once to summon him to the peers."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed the marquis with delighted surprise.

"I do indeed, my lord," was the answer; "and it is therefore under some apprehension, that the event may be consummated when Riversdale meets the minister, that a regard for the delicacy of my own political reputation makes me question the propriety of being of the party."

"It is very surprising," replied the marquis with solemnity, "that Riversdale has never hinted any thing to me on the subject. He cannot but know the pleasure and satisfaction which I shall receive, on learning that he has at last returned to a due sense of his duty as a member of the British nobility."

"I beg your lordship's pardon," said the earl, still preserving the gravest countenance possible. "Riversdale has not decidedly made up his mind; on the contrary, he is as diffident as a young lady before giving her consent, and some few caresses from the minister may yet be requisite to complete his conversion. But, my lord, among your expected guests, I do not recollect that you have named Wylie."

"He is not invited," was the answer.

"Indeed!" replied Lord Sandyford with well affected coldness; "I thought, considering the part he has played in the drama, of which this said dinner is the *dénouement*, his absence will be a blank. Lady Sandyford will be hugely disappointed."

"It did not strike me in that light before," said the marquis; "but I will instantly send him a card, though between ourselves, my lord, his manners are not just in unison with those of the company I expect."

"You will particularly oblige me by inviting him," rejoined the earl; "and I am persuaded that were he brought more into society with Riversdale, the conversion, to which your lordship looks forward with so much solicitude, will be the sooner accomplished."

The marquis, although naturally dull, saw through the quiz-

zical humour of his son-in-law: and laughing, said, "Really, Sandyford, I know not what to make of you; but has Riversdale in any degree changed his opinions?"

"In truth, my lord, I very much suspect he has unconsciously—at least Wylie thinks he will soon change; and I place great reliance on his discernment and sagacity. I would therefore advise your lordship to give the minister a hint.

"Well, well, but joking aside," cried the delighted father, "how does it happen that you, a Whig, should be so anxious to be rid, as it were, of Riversdale?"

"Because," replied the earl, "when I get into office, I shall employ only the sound and true of our own party; and I have my doubts of Riversdale."

The marquis again perceived that the earl was playing with him, and said, "I see how it is, Sandyford; you have some motive for wishing to see your friend, the member, along with the minister; and all this is but a manœuvre for some sinister purpose that you do not choose to explain."

"I am sure," replied the earl laughing, "your lordship cannot suspect I entertain any hope, that Wylie, by being brought into social contact with the heaven-born statesman, will return home a Whig, or think less of him as a man than as a minister?"

"You are a most extraordinary puzzle, Sandyford," said the marquis. "Knowing as I do what your party say of my distinguished friend, I should not be surprised were you to confess that you really entertain some expectation of seeing Wylie's confidence shaken in the minister's talents, by witnessing how much that eminent person can bend to the common level of human nature in the friendly moments of convivial ease; for I have all along suspected that you were not satisfied to find Wylie arrayed on our side."

"Ah, my lord, that was a bold stroke of yours: and certainly I have no reason to be pleased that he has turned a Tory," replied the earl waggishly; but, in truth, he had never given the subject a moment's reflection.

"Yes," said the marquis, rubbing his hands with glee; "I do take some credit to myself for that, as I doubt not your lord-

ship did intend to return him on your own interest. A man of his talents was not to be lost to the country."

The earl was amused at the idea of the marquis, in supposing that the integrity of Wylie's character was so pliant as to be moulded by any parliamentary connexion; and said coldly, as if in resentment for the reflection implied on the opposition, but in reality to prolong his trifling with the self-complacency of the old peer, "The loss to the country is by the side he has chosen."

The marquis immediately explained, or, in better English, made an apology, and, of course, the conversation was changed; for the good-nature of Lord Sandyford would not allow him to dally longer with trifles, to which the marquis attached the most serious importance, and with which he could not go further, without the risk of encroaching on feelings and prejudices, that it would have been as hopeless as cruel to have attempted to change or controvert. The consequence, however, of this conversation, was an immediate invitation to our hero, and a visit the same afternoon from the marquis to the minister, to intimate that, by a few particular attentions, he had some reason to hope Lord Riversdale would be found not altogether incorrigible in his political heresies.

The minister, engrossed with the arduous tasks of his great office during a period of rapid changes and awful events, knew little of the character of Lord Riversdale. He only recollected, that several years before, when his lordship entered parliament, he had heard him spoken of as a young nobleman of very promising talents, but infected with revolutionary opinions. He was therefore pleased to receive so favourable an account of the state of his sentiments, and congratulated the marquis on the prospect of seeing the good old English principles of his family inherited by a son able and qualified to support them with vigour and dignity.

In the mean time Lady Sandyford had received an account from the earl of the conversation of the morning, and freely acknowledged that her opinions were as to his character and that of her brother, coincided with those of our hero; while she could not refrain from warmly remonstrating with his

lordship for indulging his waggery at the expense of her father, whom she was apprehensive might in consequence be brought into some awkward dilemma with the minister.

CHAPTER LXXX.

A STATESMAN.

OUR hero, on the day of the Marquis of Avonside's banquet, arrived a short time before Lord and Lady Sandford. The principal guests were already assembled; and among them the premier, with several of the other ministers who had received invitations. When Andrew was announced, his name, as one of the marquis's new members, naturally excited the attention of the politicians; and he perceived, on entering the drawing-room, that his appearance did not produce the most reverential impression on the minor statesmen. But the minister, with that bright and penetrating look for which he was so remarkable, darted at him a keen and inquisitive glance; and, as soon as Andrew had made his bow to their noble host, crossed the floor towards him. "His strides," as our hero himself described them, "were as stiff and as long as a splinkey laddie's stalking on stilts;" and, without being introduced, he immediately entered into conversation with him, in so condescending a manner that Wylie felt it as particular.

The acute and pedagogue aspect of that great man was not calculated to conciliate at first sight; but there was a charm in the urbanity of his voice, and the full rounded harmony of his language, which almost persuaded the stranger that the meagre anatomy of his figure was invested with magnificence and dignity. The moment that the premier spoke, our hero felt the full force of its influence; and for some time stood overpowered, at once by its effects and the sense of an affability too artificial to be agreeable. The calm sustained voice and measured sentences gave him, indeed, a feeling of the existence of a faculty far

superior to the more various and impassioned eloquence which occasionally burst from Lord Sandyford; but under all the acquired habits and accomplishments of the minister, he intuitively discovered that lofty pride which constituted the hard features of his character, and he would have retreated from his condescension. This, however, the other was determined not to permit; for he had made himself, in some degree, acquainted with the history and talents of all the new members returned at the late election, and had received a strong impression, but not altogether a correct one—for it was chiefly from the marquis—of the professional address and general ability of our hero, and was resolved to cultivate his acquaintance particularly.

He had therefore, as we have mentioned, immediately addressed him in a distinguished manner—flatteringly on those topics with which he conceived him to be best informed. But neither by professional subjects—nor by public affairs—nor by the principles of political economy—nor by the beauties of classic literature—nor by the ancient or modern history of England, or of Europe—no, not by one of all the different tests which he was in the practice of applying to strangers, especially to young members of parliament, did the minister obtain a single answer, that in any degree corresponded with the opinion he had been taught to form of Wylie's intelligence and sagacity; and he was on the point of turning away from him, to enquire of the marquis if this was indeed the new member for Bidfort, of whom his lordship had spoken in terms of such admiration and respect, when Lord and Lady Sandyford were announced.

The moment the earl entered the room, he saw Andrew's embarrassment, as he stood with the premier, like, as his lordship often said, a guinea-pig beside a camelopard in the plates of some cheap edition of Buffon, and almost immediately joined them.

The minister was slightly acquainted with the earl; he had heard of his talents, and he knew his history. He accordingly addressed him in his best and freest manner; insomuch, that our hero could not but admire the tact and spirit with which his lordship's peculiarities were so dexterously treated, while at the same time he was unconsciously obliged to notice the striking

loquence which under all the minister, he intuitively felt the hard created from his determined not to free, acquainted others returned at expression, but not in the marquis—of our hero, and particularly.

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The earl; he had He accordingly inasmuch, that spirit with which created, while at times the striking

contrast between the elegant natural freedom of his patron, and the formal and elaborated affability of the statesman.

When the first salutations were over, the earl looked merrily at Andrew, as he said to the minister, "I hope my friend Wylie is to move the address on the king's speech? He looks as if you had been saying he was expected to do so!"

"If it would afford any gratification to your lordship that Mr Wylie should undertake the task, an arrangement may be made for that purpose," replied the minister.

The earl bowed, and said, with a smile that was felt as it was meant, "I can have no wish to interfere with any ministerial arrangement;" and he added, in a still gayer strain, "But I should like to hear what view my friend would take of the expediency of continuing the war, the usual topic on such occasions."

"I fancy," replied Andrew, "that there can be little doubt of that expediency for a twelvemonth or so yet."

"Yet!" exclaimed the minister, struck both with the word and the manner in which it was said—"Do you then think that the continuance of the war ought not to be regulated by events?—ought not to be contingent on the development of circumstances?—and that it is so governed by natural laws as to partake in some degree of the nature and duration of an organized existence?"

"Just so, sir," replied the new member, "for all the wildfire of the French Revolution is burned out; and Boney, the sorrow, though he calls himself a consul, is just a king; all things are settling into a kingly order again, but no of a peaceable sort; on that account, a peace is, I'm thinking, the only way of getting on the war."

"How so?" said Lord Sandysford, interested by the remark, and by the effect which it seemed to produce on the statesman.

"Because," replied our hero, "the frame of government that's now in France is the creature of the public opinion which was begotten out of the events of the war; and it is only adapted for a state of tribulation and warfare; and therefore, if ye wish to see the downfall of Boney's dominion, ye must subject it to a change of public opinion, the which change will grow out of a state

of peace. But I have a notion that it's no just expedient yet to come to terms with him; he must be alloow'd to feel himsel' more settled; ye must give him length of rope, that he may grow a little more unbearable before ye make peace; for it's only by letting the world see o' a body believe it may do what it likes, that ye're to wile him and his legions into the snare o' destruction. His power is only to be cast down by his own folly; and ye maun submit to make peace belyve, just to let the world see that his system is no one which can be endured in peace. In short, it's my conceit that there can be no durable peace contracted with rampageous soldiers; and what will France do with all her armies in a time of peace? She'll just gang again to war, and the world will rise in a rage to put her down, as a wild beast that must be driven into a den and muzzled there."

The minister said nothing; but when Lady Sandyford came up, and drew Andrew aside to speak to him concerning some little affair that she wished him to do for her, he remained for some time thoughtful, and then addressed himself to Lord Sandyford, saying, "Mr Wylie has placed the expediency of making peace with France in a singular point of view. I perceive that he deserves his high character; although he is in acquirements far below mediocrity, and in the ostensible glitter of talent greatly inferior to many men, who can form no such conception of that policy which future considerations may render it expedient to adopt."

Dinner was announced; and, in taking his seat at the table, the minister placed himself beside our hero, and treated him with that freedom which constituted one of the powerful charms of his private life.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

A PROSELYTE.

LORD Riversdale, from a presentiment arising either from the prediction of our hero, or from some consciousness of a change

expedient yet to feel himself more at ease than he may grow a little more so for it's only by doing what it likes, and not what it likes, to snare o' destruction in its own folly; and let the world see that peace can be made in peace. In France do with the peaceable peaceable gang again to get her down, as a muzzled there."

Sandyford came concerning some matter which he remained for himself to Lord Sandyford's diency of making

I perceive that in acquirements of talent and such conception to render it expe-

seat at the table, and treated him with powerful charms

ing either from the sense of a change

within himself, which he was averse to acknowledge, did not make his appearance in the drawing-room; and in taking his seat at the dinner-table, kept as far aloof as possible from the minister, in order to avoid the seduction of his attentions. The Earl of Sandyford suspecting the viscount's feelings, and his own playful disposition having been renewed to a boyish gayety from the time of his reunion with the countess, he could not resist the temptation of bringing him at once into communion with the stately premier. Accordingly, as he happened to sit next Riversdale, he observed to him that his acknowledgments to the minister's salutation were so cold and distant, that it must have attracted the notice of all present; and that people might think it weak of him to infringe the reciprocities of social life by such a decided manifestation of political prejudice. This was quite enough to make Riversdale change his whole demeanour:—from that moment he used innumerable little artifices of address to engage the attention of the statesman, and not long without effect, for the quick eye and quicker mind of the minister almost instantaneously discovered that Riversdale was actuated by some motive; and under the impression which the marquis had given him of a change in the viscount's opinions, he attributed his attentions to that source. A most delightful equivocal deference and submission on the part of the viscount, and of compliments and courtesies on that of the premier, was in consequence performed between them, to the infinite amusement of Lord Sandyford. Things, indeed, went so far, that our hero became interested in the result; not, however, suspecting the cause, till he happened to observe the arch roguery with which the earl was watching the progress of the scene.

"I think that Lord Riversdale," said the member, whisperingly to the minister, "would not be ill-pleased to move the address in the peers—ye should give him a summons."

This was somewhat in a plainer and more point-blank style than statesmen are accustomed to receive suggestions; but the premier had by this time formed a correct opinion of Wylie's downright character, and observed laughingly, at perceiving that the motives of his reciprocities with Rivers-

dale were so clearly seen through, "Will you propose the thing to him?"

"I'll no object to do that; but ye should first try to show him that ye're no continuing the war against the liberties of mankind," was the reply.

The minister was still more diverted by this remark, and said, "In that case, I can employ no better argument than your own in the drawing-room."

Lord Sandysford, observing the under tone in which this brief dialogue was carried on, partly guessed the subject, and shook his head significantly to Wylie; nothing further, however, took place while the ladies remained at table, for the minister began to condole with the Duchess of Dashingwell, who sat at his right hand, on the necessity he should be under of imposing some new tax, affecting to consult her grace whether cats as well as dogs might not be rendered productive to the revenue, amusing her with his badinage, to which, with a sort of jocular good taste, he gave an air of official formality, that was admirably in character with his own peculiar manners.

When the ladies had retired, he took an opportunity to advert to some recent explosion of popular feeling, remarking, with sincerity, that, prior to the American war, the European governments were so strong, that they undervalued insurrections; but that since the French Revolution, there was some danger of falling into the opposite error, and that many of the harmless ebullitions of the populace ran the risk of being considered as political dangers. The perfect clearness, beauty, and candour, with which this was stated, excited the admiration of all present, and was in charming unison with the sentiments of Lord Riversdale. Even the Earl of Sandysford, who had no particular esteem for the minister, was delighted alike with the liberality of the sentiment, and the inimitable elegance and perspicuity of the illustrations. Our hero alone had any suspicion of the design for which it was made; but he sat also in admiration, less, however, of the matter, than of the address of the speaker.

The conversation then naturally diverged to subjects connected with popular governments, in which the earl bore a distinguished part, and expressed himself on the vanity of popu-

larity, with such perfect grace, that every one who heard him, deplored in their own minds that such superior talents should have so long been misapplied. In illustration of his opinions, he repeated,—

"For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people, but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom, to be dispraised, were no small praise?"

"Were it not," said the minister, "that Milton was a republican, I should think, from the rhythm and dignity of these verses, that they were of his composition.—Is it an imitation by your lordship?"

"They are really Milton's," replied the earl; "and these sentiments he ascribes to the Saviour, in answer to the temptations of Satan, and in his work which he most esteemed—*Paradise Regained*."

"If that's the case, they must have been dictated by a penitent spirit; for he would not put any thing in the mouth of the Saviour that he did not believe nor venerate," said our hero. "He may, in his younger days, have been a republican, like many other clever lads; but I doubt, with such notions of the instability of popular opinion, he didna depart this life in that delusion." And in saying this, Andrew looked across the table to Lord Riversdale, who sat in a state of strange pleasure, at hearing it so ingeniously averred, that Milton had probably lived to repent his republican enthusiasm.

Wylie's remark gave the minister his clue, and with that felicity of exposition which transcended all Greek and Roman fame in oratory, he took, in his most captivating colloquial manner, a general view of the progress of the French Revolution, and dexterously interweaving the suggestions of our hero, with respect to the continuance of the war, demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of Lord Riversdale, that whatever was the

opinion of the opponents of government as to the origin of the war on the part of England, the apostacy of France from her own principles had been so decided in its character, so violent in its effects, and had carried her so far, or—as Mr Burke said of that emigration of opinions which characterize the new Whigs—had so transported her beyond Aurora and the Ganges, that England, merely by remaining stationary in her principles, was evidently become the champion of whatever existed in the world, of liberty, of order, and of honour.

The effect of this exposition was irresistible on the wavering mind of Riversdale, and, when parliament met, the prophecy of Wylie was in the main part fulfilled. His lordship was called up to the peers by summons; and though he did not move the address, yet he took his place on the ministerial side of the House, without exciting the slightest observation. His old friends had, indeed, been accustomed for years to consider him as entirely alienated from their party, or rather as having never joined it; while the members of his father's side, regarded his accession as the natural result of the hereditary politics of the family. Much, therefore, as the Marquis of Avonside esteemed our hero, for the part he had taken in the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Sandysford, he regarded the conversion of his son as conferring a far greater obligation, especially when the minister informed his lordship, that he considered it to have been effected by the singular shrewdness with which Wylie had thrown out the hints that had enabled himself to speak with so much effect to the undecided dispositions of the viscount.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE DISCLOSURE.

FORTUNE poured her cornucopia so liberally around our hero, that honours and riches seemed to lie at his acceptance; for although no particular appearance of patronage was shown to

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himself on the part of Lord and Lady Sandyford, still they both felt themselves so much his debtors, that the powerful influence of their respective relations and connexions was unweariedly exerted to promote his advancement. They often, however, remarked to each other, that there was something about him which could not be easily explained. The earl had at one time imagined that his rigid frugality was dictated by a sordid desire of riches; but the warmth of feeling which he had shown on so many different occasions, had long obliterated every relic of that opinion; and he saw that Wylie could not only be liberal, but even more—munificent. Once or twice it occurred to his lordship, that there was a degree of system in the simplicity of his manners, strangely at variance with his vanity in cultivating the acquaintance of persons of rank and fashion.

"I have an idea," said he, in speaking on the subject one day to the countess, "to confer on him what I think he will esteem an honour; for it appears to me, that he attaches more value to those things which give him personal consequence than to any sort of pecuniary favours."

What his lordship meant was not then explained; but some time after, when the countess had presented him with an heir, he declared his intention to nominate Wylie one of the sponsors. "For," said the earl, "as we have no chance of getting a fairy now-a-days, I do not think we shall be able to do better."

The countess smiled, and said gravely, "I shall rejoice to obtain so honest a friend for our dear boy, and pledged to be his friend by the sacred obligation of the baptismal vows; but if Wylie is a presbyterian, I fear, from the integrity of his character, that he will decline your offer."

At this juncture of the conversation, the Duchess of Dashingwell happened to call, and, on the subject being mentioned, her grace said, "Like Lord Sandyford, I, too, have remarked, that beneath his simplicity, he has not only the slyness of a fox, but the ambition of an ancient personage, too shocking to be named to ears polite."

"Sometimes," interposed the countess, "it has occurred to me, when I have observed the indifference with which he

regarded our female friends, that he had formed some secret attachment."

"Your ladyship," cried the duchess, "has hit the right mark. I do now remember something of the sort; and the wizard of a creature had the power not only to make me his confidant, but by some irresistible spell to constrain me to become his advocate. I do not well recollect what ensued, or how the matter ended; but I have at this moment in my mind's eye a beautiful Scottish girl at one of my assemblies, leaning on the arm of an old maiden aunt, who had a neck like a bundle of bamboo-canes. I forget their names, and all other circumstances—Bless me! what a memory I have!—But Wylie was up to the ears in love with the niece—I think he said from childhood. We must put him to the question on the subject."

While her grace was thus rattling away with her wonted good-humour, the earl and countess exchanged expressive glances. Neither of them were inclined to explain before the duchess what was passing in their minds; but when she had retired, his lordship exclaimed, "The Duchess of Dashingwell is certainly as arrant a chattel as ever constituted any part of household furniture. But a bright flake or two of observation fell from her in this last shower of talk, that has thrown some new light on Wylie's conduct. If it be true that he was in love some years ago, I would bet ten to one we shall discover some equally wise and romantic motive at the bottom of the principles by which he has been so long and so constantly actuated. But we must treat him warily."

While our hero was thus the subject of conversation, he was announced; and after the first salutations were over, and while he was admiring the infant in the lap of its mother, the earl said to him, "Wylie, will you have any objection to stand godfather to the little fellow?"

"I doubt," replied Andrew, "it's no in my power. I am no sure of the nature of godfathers and godmothers. But ye shouldna think that I thereby cast any reflection either on them or the other prelatie doxies of the English. But though I cannot accept the great honour your lordship has propounded,

gude forgive me if I say, that sponsors are forbidden in the ten commands."

The earl looked and smiled to Lady Sandysford, and then said, in his most generous manner, "This rigid principle teaches me to respect you more than ever; and I now suspect, Wylie, that the state of self-denial in which you live has its foundation in some nobler motive than I have yet been able to discover. I have never heard you speak of your family, nor have you once asked my interest in behalf of any friend."

Andrew blushed slightly at this remark, and said, "I have no friends to fash your lordship about."

"But," resumed the earl, in a gayer tone, "the Duchess of Dashingwell, who was here this morning, has been telling us, that she recollects something of your being in love several years ago."

The confusion with which our hero looked, left no doubt in the mind of the earl of the fact; and he was on the point of saying in banter, "Have you been slighted?" when, suddenly recollecting the humility of the condition from which he had himself raised him, he checked the levity of his manner, and said affectionately, "If there are any circumstances in your attachment that our influence can improve or change, why do you not explain yourself? Lady Sandysford and myself owe you a debt which we can never adequately repay. You should add to your other kindnesses, the favour of letting us know in what manner we can contribute to your happiness."

Our hero felt that he had now at last attained the summit, for which he had so long and so perseveringly struggled. Without hereditary connexions—without the advantages of education—and without the possession of any of that splendour of talent, which is deemed so essential to success in the path of honourable distinction, he had acquired a degree of personal consequence that placed him on a level with Mary Cunningham: and for the first time, not only to any friend, but also to himself, did he avow the force of that attachment, which, in the earnest pursuit of the means to indulge and to dignify, he had scarcely allowed himself to cherish, even while it constituted the actuating principle of his life. Lord and Lady Sandysford admired the delicacy

with which he acknowledged the secret motive of his preference for the society of the elegant and the noble, when he described the lowliness of his own original condition, contrasted with the rank of the Craighlands family. "But now," said he, "if you will complete the work, which, unknown to yourselves, you have patronized so long, I would fain beg of you to lend your countenance to gain for me some portion of that consideration among my old friends, which neither money nor manners can command. In short, my lord and leddy, by the blessing of heaven, through your instrumentality, I am now in a condition to make proposals to Miss Cunningham; but she belongs to an ancient family, and beforehand I would like to satisfy both her and her friends, that I do not presume altogether on the weight of my purse, to think myself no disparagement to their pride and antiquity. But there's another thing—it's no my design to make any proposals to her, if I think that either the world's pelf or patronage would alone rule her to accept me."

"That," said the earl, "is really carrying your refinement a little too far. How are you to discover that she is to be won by any purer influence? Have you any reason to believe that the attachment is mutual?"

"I'll no be so self-conceited as to say," replied Wylie; "but we have had some colleaguings together, which, if remembered in the spirit of kindness, will be quite satisfactory to me."

And he then recounted those incidents of his early history which we have so circumstantially described; but with so much more wit and humour, that both his lordship and the countess were ready to expire with laughter; and declared that, as soon as Lord Chastington was christened, they would accompany him to Scotland, for the express purpose of being introduced to the worthies of the Craighlands and Stoneyholm.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

INTENTIONS.

THE Countess of Sandyford, after the important disclosure described in the preceding chapter, reflected with an anxiety to which gratitude lent a sentiment of affection, on every means to facilitate the attainment of our hero's object. And, among others, it occurred to her that if a baronetcy could be procured for him, it would give a stamp and permanency to his elevation, that could not fail to produce great effects on the hereditary prejudices of the Cunninghams. But there were in this many difficulties; for the delicacy of the earl, with respect to political favours, would not allow him to move in the business; she even feared that it might induce him to interdict her from seeking the honour through any other channel, although that of her father presented one easy and obvious. Still, so great was her solicitude on this subject, that she could not help saying one day, as they were talking together of their intended journey to Scotland, "I think it would be a great feather in Wylie's cap if my father would only take it into his head to obtain for him a baronetcy."

"That I have no doubt his lordship will do, on the slightest hint, were Wylie once provided with an adequate estate; it would undoubtedly be of consequence to him as a lover."

"I have a great mind to speak to my father. Do you think I may do so?" said the countess shrewdly.

"O yes!" exclaimed the earl; "I'll speak to him myself; for, as I am now done with all political questions, I feel no impropriety on the subject."

His lordship then explained to her, that, in consequence of Wylie's advice, he had resolved to devote his life to promote the happiness and prosperity of his own tenantry, as the best way of serving his country; being fully convinced, that, although perhaps able to make some figure in public life, he was not fit to take any commanding station, and a subordinate neither his rank nor his feelings would allow him to accept. The coun-

tess, who had also been taught by experience that he was indeed too eager and sensitive to bear those quips and scorns of the time to which statesmen are exposed, considered the part which Wylie had taken, in promoting this judicious determination, as not one of the least obligations which he had laid them under. And she said, "I wish that you could persuade him to make a purchase in our neighbourhood. Castle-Rooksborough is still for sale. It has many claims on our remembrance. There I performed the first purely benevolent action of my life—in taking the child of the unhappy Ferrers under my protection; and from that day, and on that spot, began the series of events, which, however troubled at first, have brought us such mutual happiness."

The earl embraced her with emotion, and said, "It is a place I shall ever love, and it will grow still more dear to me, if we can induce our friend to take up his residence there; for I suspect that, were he married to Miss Cunningham, he will not long remain a Londoner. I fear, however, that he will prefer Scotland. But let us make the trial."

Accordingly, the earl, soon after this conversation, spoke to our hero, and urged him to buy Castle-Rooksborough. "If you have not money enough," said his lordship, "as my incumbrances are now nearly paid off, it may be easily managed."

The mind of our hero had never contemplated any acquisition so magnificent. In the most sanguine of his reveries he had never looked much beyond the dignity of an ordinary Ayrshire laird; and in reply to the earl, he said, "I'm thinking, my lord, that ye give me credit for higher pretensions than I ever entertained; and I have already provided myself with a bit ground in the North. The late Laird o' Wylie gaed last year a' to pigs and whistles, and the property being for sale, I directed an acquaintance in Edinburgh, Mr Threeper, who is an advocate there, to attend the roup, by the which, as he writes me this morning, I am now the Wylie of that ilk."

"But," said the earl, with a feeling of disappointment, "you may buy Castle-Rooksborough too."

"It's far from my hand," was the reply.

"Then I'll tell you what, assist me to raise the money, and I'll

buy Castle-Rooksborough. The price will not reduce my income half so low as it was when I first retired to Chastington Hall. I have had no means of gratifying Lady Sandyford in any wish before, and she has taken a fancy to that place; but she would be content were you the purchaser. Perhaps, if you prove a thriving wooer, we might get you, in neighbourliness, to reside occasionally there."

Our hero, when the earl adverted to the effect which the purchase would have on his own income, made a slight convulsive movement, for he perceived that his lordship had resolved to buy the estate, not so much to gratify the countess, as with a view of giving it to him; but he took no notice of what he suspected, observing only, that no doubt his lordship might now easily raise the money; adding, however, in a way which convinced the earl that his intention was discovered, "Nor, my lord, will it be any great loss, for the rental of Castle-Rooksborough will no make the bargain all dead loss. I will, however, be plain with your lordship. Within myself I feel that were the object of my ambition attained, or found impossible to gain, I shall then have but small cause to continue in this part of the country, for I have ever looked to taking my rest among the scenes of my young days; for still, in my thought, the mornings there are brighter than those I have seen in any other place—the evenings far grander, and the nights thicker set with stars. It is but a boy's fancy; but to me, in all my prosperity, it has been like the shepherd's clothes of the honest man that was made a vizier, as I have read in a book called the Pleasing Instructor. I have treasured it in my heart, where others hoard their dearest wishes, and I could never part with it now, without forgetting myself. However, come what come may out of our journey to Scotland, I'll pay your lordship a yearly visitation, just as it were for no more than to keep me in remembrance of the humble state from which you have raised me."

Lord Sandyford was so much affected by the sensibility with which this was said, that he pressed the hand of Wylie, and retired without speaking.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE BARONETCY.

IN the mean time, the countess, intent to procure the honour of a baronetcy for her friend, had been closeted with her father, the marquis, on the subject. She was well aware of his lordship's peculiarities; and knew that, if she immediately requested him to ask the title, he would, in all probability, have raised many objections, and probably in the end refused. A woman of address, and now awakened to the consciousness of all her ascendant faculties, she attacked his lordship in the most effectual manner. Before broaching the subject, she enquired how her brother, Lord Riversdale, seemed to feel under the honours of the peerage; and when her father assured her that he promised to be a great accession to the ministerial phalanx, although he had not then taken any prominent part in debate, she observed that they were all under the greatest obligations to Mr Wylie.

"Yes," replied the old peer; "in him the minister tells me I have drawn a capital prize; for his shrewdness in committees is worth all the noisy talents of the debaters."

"I should not be surprised were the minister to detach him from your lordship, and make him his own," said the countess.

"That is not likely," answered the marquis of Avonside; "for he knows that, by being my member, Mr Wylie is as effectually his own as if he were returned on a pure Treasury interest."

"I cannot even affect to controvert your lordship's opinion on such subjects," said the countess; "but it occurs to me that the ministers, if they set so high a value on him, will naturally be desirous to attach him exclusively to themselves; and I should not be surprised were they to charm him into their circle by the offer of a baronetcy."

"I do not suppose," replied the marquis thoughtfully, "that Wylie can already expect to be raised so soon to that rank."

"It is impossible," rejoined the countess, "to say what are the expectations of ambitious men: and when we reflect on the

history of Wylie, it is not to be disputed that he is ambitious, from whatever cause the passion may have sprung."

"You surprise me, Augusta," said her father; "it would be a most ungrateful thing were Wylie to throw the weight of his great talents into any other scale. He surely cannot forget what I have done for him."

"True," replied the countess; "I do not think he will forget that; but then he may place opposite to your favours—observe, however, my lord, that I do not myself think so—he may place opposite to them the obligations he conferred in bringing about my reunion with Sandysford, and especially in the address by which he made a proselyte of my brother Riversdale. Perhaps, therefore, it might be as well—probably your lordship has already formed some plan on the subject—to raise him at once above the effects of ministerial influence, by procuring him a baronetcy."

"Certainly, Lady Sandysford, I did think some time or another of using my influence for that purpose, but not exactly in the course of the first session of his parliamentary career. But considering the sensation he has produced in the highest quarter, I do not think it would be a bad stroke of policy were I at once to rivet him to me for ever, by obtaining for him a baronetcy."

"It would," replied the countess, "induce the world, and particularly political men, to wonder more and more at the great efficacy of your lordship's predominant influence. Besides, I should like, above all things, to have it in my power to address Mr Wylie by the title of Sir Andrew; for you are aware, my lord, that although yourself and Sandysford have most honourably rewarded his heartfelt friendship to us, that as yet I have had no means of showing him any gratitude; and, therefore, were it at all consistent with your lordship's public views to procure a baronetcy for him, I would ask it as a favour to myself."

"Really, Augusta, you are so very considerate, that I should almost be tempted to gratify you in this, even were the policy of my family in some degree opposed to it. But seeing the likelihood of the ministers trying to enlist our little friend

entirely to themselves, I cannot serve my public and private interests better than by taking measures to obtain for Wylie the rank to which you allude."

The same day the marquis sent for Sir Charles Runnington on the subject, and instructed him to proceed in the proper manner to obtain the consent in the proper quarter to a baronetcy for our hero.

Sir Charles, as we have long ago stated, was a diplomatic character in the interest of the marquis; and in the most strict sequence to his instructions, he proceeded, step by step, to agitate the question, and to solicit the honour. In this business he had occasion to ask an audience of the premier; and on stating the object of his visit, that great man said at once, promptly "Is it possible, Sir Charles, that Mr Wylie himself can desire such a thing?"

"It will doubtless be gratifying him to receive the honour," replied Sir Charles, with a simper meant to be expressive.

"Very well, he shall have it," exclaimed the minister; "but I thought a man of his sense would never have aspired to any empty title; but, nevertheless, he shall have it. I always feel a particular gratification in obliging my noble friend the Marquis of Avonside; indeed his lordship's claims on government are of the first class, and it is not so much my desire, as it is my duty, to satisfy all his reasonable wishes."

Sir Charles was delighted with the success of this his only successful mission; and the marquis felt singularly obliged that the request was conceded, not only on account of his own public services, but in so handsome a manner, that the minister had never once enquired whether his protégé was in possession of an adequate estate to uphold the dignity of the honour. Thus, to the surprise of our hero, and of all his friends but those in the secret, he was, on the following Saturday night, gazetted a baronet, by the style and title of Sir Andrew Wylie, Baronet of Wylie, which, for the benefit of our English readers, we should add is, in the good legal language of the north, Sir Andrew Wylie, Baronet, of that Ilk, or of the same.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

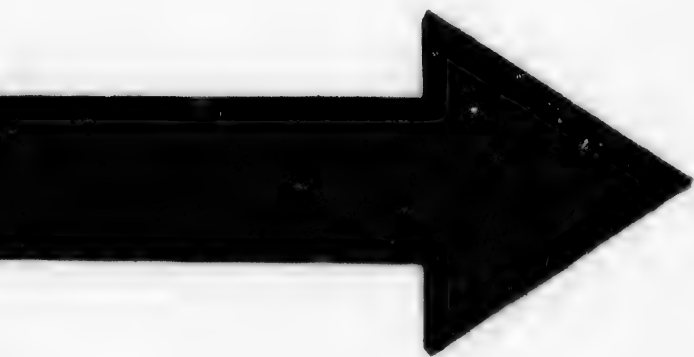
THE RETURN.

WHEN the necessary preliminaries were arranged for the journey to Scotland, the earl and countess, with Sir Andrew, set off in the same carriage. It was the intention of Lord and Lady Sandford to visit Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole at their seat of Auchinward, in Ayrshire, ostensibly in fulfilment of a promise which the countess had long made to her ladyship, who had been one of her mother's most particular and esteemed friends; but really, as the earl said, to make from that stronghold of generous feelings and affections, reprisals on the pride and prejudices of the Craighlands.

We shall not trouble our readers with any account of their journey, which was performed with all convenient expedition till the travellers reached Kilmarnock, where they separated—the earl and countess proceeding to Auchinward. Sir Andrew lingered some time at the inn, in order to throw his arrival at Stoneyholm late in the evening, and partly to inspect the re-edification of the town, which had been accomplished during his absence from Scotland; and as he walked from Brian's Inn to the cross, he felt something like sorrow to see that the place which the stands of the sweetie-wives used to adorn on the fair days, when he visited the town in company with Charles Pierston, was obliterated; a spacious and handsome street rendered it difficult to recognize the old houses which still remained in the neighbourhood. The improvements appeared to him like the changes produced by time and climate on the face of an early friend, when seen after an interval of many years; and although they bore testimony to the prosperity of his native land, they were yet, to his feelings, but as tombstones erected over the remains of ancient simplicity, and the venerable manners of the olden time.

Having returned to the inn, he ordered a chaise for Kilwinning, as he intended to walk from thence to Stoneyholm. Why he should not at once have proceeded to his grandmother's,





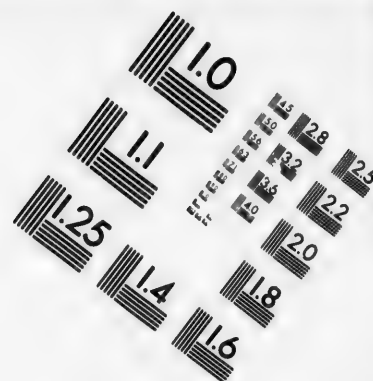
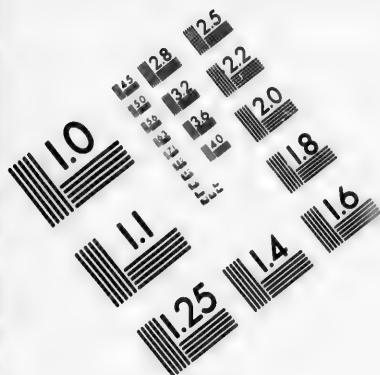
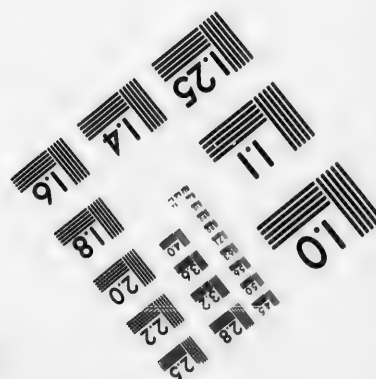
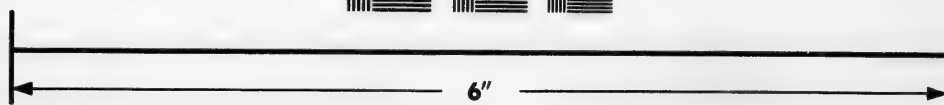
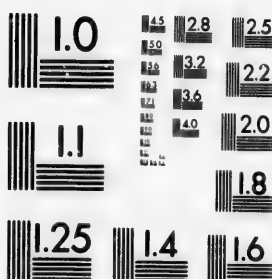


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would require more metaphysics to explain than the reader who stands in need of an explanation could comprehend. Possibly it may have originated in some wish to contemplate at leisure the scenes of his youth, or to enjoy the balmy freshness of the summer evening, or in some token of humility or silent expression of thankfulness for the happy circumstances in which he had been permitted to return; or perhaps, from a sentiment of affection towards less fortunate friends, he was averse to obtrude upon their view any indication of the prosperity which had crowned his adventures. Be this, however, as it may, he proceeded to Kilwinning.

It was a beautiful evening: the sun set in all his glory beyond the hills of Arran; and the peak and summits of Goatfield, covered with a fine aerial haze, glowed, as it were, with an internal principle of splendour. The sea in the bay of Ayr lay like molten gold, and Ailsa rose empurpled in the distance like a magnificent amethyst; while the whole coast, from the towers of Culzean to the promontory of Ardrossan, glittered with towns and villages, and the seats of many, who, like our hero, had returned home to enjoy the fruits of their prosperous adventures.

Every thing in the spacious view was calculated to calm the mind and expand the feelings. The summer was clothed in her richest verdure of luxuriant fields and leafy boughs; the streamlets flowed in clearer currents; and the colours of the broom and the daisy were unwontedly bright; the birds in the hedgerows seemed rather to hold a gentle and harmonious interchange of occasional notes, than to indulge in their own peculiar songs; even the crows, as they made way to the rooky woods, hovered in their flight, as if they partook of the general composure of all nature; and the angler, returning home, lingered in his path, and frequently paused to admire the flakes of fleecy gold that floated over the setting sun.

There are but two situations in which the adventurer, returning home, can duly appreciate the delightful influences of such an hour of holiness, and beauty, and rest. The one, when he is retreating from an unsuccessful contest with fortune—when, baffled and mortified by the effects either of his integrity or of his friendlessness, he abandons the struggle, and retires to his

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native shades as to the embraces of a parent, to be lulled by the sounds that were dear to his childhood, and which he fondly hopes will appease his sorrows, and soothe him asleep for ever;—the other, when, like our hero, conscious of having achieved the object of his endeavours, he comes with an honest pride to enjoy that superiority over his early companions, which, after all the glosses that may be put upon the feeling, is really the only reward of an adventurous spirit. Both prompt to the same conduct; but the maimed, and the luckless, and the humiliated, shrink from the view, shivering with grief as they remember the thick and blushing promises of their spring, and contrast them with the sear and yellow leaf of their withered and fruitless autumn.

By the time Sir Andrew reached Kilwinning, the village fires and the stars were shining out; and the full moon, which had risen over the shadowy masses of the woods of Eglinton, tinted the leaves of the hedges and the ripples of the Garnock water with a flickering and silvery light.

Our hero, as he walked to Stoneyholm, recognized every step of the road which he had so often travelled; but it seemed to him that all things, as he approached the hamlet, had become smaller and meaner; the trees appeared stunted, the hedges more rude and irregular, and the distance between each well-known object greatly abridged.

He passed several cottages, with the inhabitants of which he had formerly been intimate, but a strange restraint prevented him from entering any of them. The turnpike-house had been one of his favourite haunts, and he had made up his mind to go in; but before tapping at the door, he glanced in at the window, and saw, assembled round the fire, a numerous family, comprehending a member from all the seven ages of man, but not one face of an old acquaintance.

The trust of the gate was now in the hands of strangers, and this mutation made him feel a disappointment, gentle of its kind, but melancholy: and he went forward in the dark shadow of the hedges, pondering on a thousand little incidents that had long slept in his remembrance, but which the sight of old and endeared objects, in the shroudy paleness of the moonlight, recalled as with the sadness and solemnity of churchyard recollections.

At a turn of the road, where the hedge on the one side terminated, and the river was seen open and glittering, as it murmured in its shallow and pebbly channel, he obtained the first view of Stoneyholm, beyond which the groves of the Craiglands lay dark and massive; several lights showed where the mansion-house stood; and the tall white chimneys above the trees appeared to him like the sails of a vessel that lay sunk in deep and silent waters.

But the grave and pensive mood in which he thus approached his early home, he was soon sensible ought not to be indulged; and, making an effort to quicken his step and lighten his spirit, he walked briskly to the door of his grandmother's cottage. His intention was to enter suddenly, to enjoy the exclamations of her joyous surprise; but in passing the window towards the door, he heard some one within speaking, and paused irresolute; he listened, and thought that the accents of the voice were familiar: they recalled to his mind, with the distinctness of more than painting, all the most remarkable passages of his boyish years; the amusements he had enjoyed with companions, dead, or scattered, or chained by fortune to rustic drudgery; even the image of poor Maggy, the magpie, came up in the visions of that dream of fond remembrance; and trains of feelings and associations were awakened, which filled his eyes with tears; for the voice was that of the young lady Tannyhill, then sitting with his grandmother, penning a letter to himself, in which she earnestly entreated, now that he was become a great and grand man, to let her see him before she died. With a merry hand, and a beating heart, he tumbled at the pin; and as the schoolmaster admitted him, he went forward into the light before old Martha was aware. But we leave the reader to imagine what ensued, while we refrain, in reverence, from presuming to describe the joy and the piety of that hallowed scene.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE CHURCH.

THE next day being Sunday, Sir Andrew took an early walk in his former favourite haunts, among the woods of the Craiglands, and returned to his grandmother's cottage without having met any of his early friends. While they were at breakfast, which consisted of the same homely fare that he had been accustomed to in his youth, the master called for the purpose of inviting him to walk to church with him. That modest and gentle being still seemed to regard him as the same curious boy that he had so long before known him; nor was there any thing in the demeanour of our hero, during the interview of the preceding evening, to make him suspect that riches and honours had in aught changed the simplicity of his original character.

Sir Andrew, however, declined the invitation. "I canna gae wi' you the day, master," said he; "for grannie will expect me to cleek wi' her, and aiblins to carry her big Testament, as of old, tied in a napkin under my oxter."

There was a little waggery in the manner in which this was expressed, but of so moderate a kind, that it might have passed for sincerity. He had, indeed, resolved in his own mind to resume his former familiarity, as well as the broad accent of his boyish dialect; not that the latter required any effort, for he had carefully and constantly preserved it, but he had unconsciously adopted a few terms and phrases purely English; and in the necessity of speaking intelligibly to his clients and fashionable friends, had habitually acquired, without any of the southern tone, considerable purity of language. The characteristic answer of his grandmother, however, set the matter at rest.

"No," replied Martha, "though I'll hae great pride and pleasure in seeing you, Andrew, walking at my side to the house of Him that has preserved you in the hollow of his hand, and in the skirts of his garment, as the shepherd tenderly does the helpless lamb, I maunna forget that ye're noo a man whom the king delighted to honour, and that it's baith my part, as a

liege and a Christian, no to require any thing at your hands that would misliken the favour of Providence wherewith you have been blessed, and raised into the light that shines on high places."

Sir Andrew looked at the worthy master, whose eyes were suffused with delight at this expression of a pious and venerable humility; and in the same moment he rose from his seat, and walked to the door, to conceal the responsive sympathy of his own emotion.

As it was soon known in the village that our hero had come to visit his grandmother, before the bell began to ring many of the inhabitants were assembled in the churchyard; and when he was seen coming along the path, with Martha on his right, and the master on his left, a buzz, and pressing forward among the spectators, showed the interest his arrival had excited. The old people observed, with a lively sentiment of kindness towards him, that he was dressed much in the same style as when he left them; but they became diffident and bashful as he approached, and some of the farmer lads, who had been at school with him, respectfully took off their hats. The innocent Tannyhill smiled as he looked around, and felt as if he was participating in the honours of a triumph. But Sir Andrew himself appeared more sedately cheerful, and shook hands heartily with all his old acquaintance; and to those who possessed any peculiarity of humour, he said something blithe and appropriate, which showed how perfectly he remembered them all. Among others, he recognised old Thomas Steek, the tailor, leaning on his crutch, and said to him, "Ye see the Lunnoners haena been able to put me in a better fashion than you and clipping Jock did."

On reaching the church door, where Mr Covenant, the elder, a tall, pale, grey-haired man, with a cocked hat, a white three-tier wig, and a blue cloak, was standing at the brod, he paused for a moment, and allowed the master and his grandmother to pass on before him. The crowd, especially the school-boys, had followed close at his heels, in the expectation of seeing him deposit some liberal donation to the poor. They reckoned on nothing less than a handful of gold, and it at first appeared that he had some intention of realizing their expectation; but he checked

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himself, and instead of throwing any thing into the plate, gave the elder a slip of paper, to be sent up to the procentor, and simply said to him, "Mr Covenant, I'm no just so weel prepared at this moment to do what I ought, so ye'll come to me the morn's morning betimes, when I can better testify my thankfulness for being restored in safety among you;" and in saying these words, he walked thoughtfully to the pew where his grandmother sat, and took his old place at her side.

The church was unusually crowded, and all eyes, till the minister entered the pulpit, were turned towards him, as he sat looking on the reading-board, and tracing his still unobliterated initials, and the outlines of birds and houses, which, in the languor of Mr Dozadeal's discourses, he had formerly inscribed with a pin, to the great displeasure of his grandmother.

When Mr Symington, who had succeeded Dr Dozadeal in the ministry, after the doctor's call to the better stipend of Bunnockhive, rose to give out the psalm, Sir Andrew, startled by the sound of the new voice, was roused from his reverie, and felt for a moment as if all the incidents of his life, from the time he had last sat in the church, were the impalpable fancies of one of his youthful dreams; and this feeling, when the venerable divine read out the two first lines of the thirtieth psalm,

"Lord, I will thee extol, for thou
Hast lifted me on high,"

one of those which he had repeated to Mary Cunningham, made him involuntarily turn his eye up towards the laird's loft, where it again met for a moment the same bright and smiling orb that he had so often seen sparkling in the same sphere.

Mr Symington possessed more of the pastoral virtues of his office than his predecessor, but he was neither an eloquent nor an interesting preacher, nor was his subject calculated that day to attract the attention of our hero: so that, after the opening of the sermon, Sir Andrew began to look around him, and to discover, with a mingled sentiment of pleasure and sorrow, many faces that he distinctly recollected; all of them, however, had suffered from the withering breath of Time. There were one or two young girls that still seemed as fresh and blooming as ever; but upon a sharper inspection, he saw they were

strangers to him, and in the altered looks of the matrons who sat beside them, he recognized the mothers for whom he had at first mistaken the daughters.

A cold and penetrating sentiment of grief quivered through his bosom, when in several instances he with difficulty made out in countenances, depressed, it might almost be said depraved, with premature age, the effects of heavy toil and constant labour, the faces of old school-fellows, whom he recollected among the boldest and the blithest of all his young companions. But this painful feeling received some alleviation, in seeing that the elder worthies of the clachan still seemed to retain their former respectability; and that, upon the whole, there was a visible improvement in the appearance of the congregation in general.

At the conclusion of the sermon, Mr Tannyhill, who held the threefold office of schoolmaster, session-clerk, and precentor, rose and read from one paper the names of those who, in distress and sickness, desired the prayers of the congregation. He then took up another, which he had folded in his Psalm-book, and with an elevated and cheerful countenance, as if exulting in the task he was required to perform, said aloud, with an emphatic and triumphant accent, "And Andrew Wylie returns thanks for his safe return."

The instant these words were pronounced, a universal rustle in the church, followed by a low and kindly whisper, showed the impression which their simplicity made on the congregation: and it was observed that the laird, after looking down at Sir Andrew for about a minute, turned to his sister, and said something which appeared to give her pleasure; what Mary Cunningham felt on the occasion was not easily guessed; for she dropped her handkerchief, and stooped to lift it, and when she again stood up, she was so engaged in putting it into her pocket, which she did not exactly find so readily as she appeared to wish, that nobody could see her face.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE CHURCHYARD.

WHEN the congregation was dismissed, Sir Andrew left his grandmother, telling her, that, as he wished to speak to some of his old acquaintance, he would follow her home. Accordingly, hastening out into the churchyard, he took his station exactly on the spot where he was wont to exchange the smile of youthful recognizance with Mary Cunningham; and while he was joyfully greeted and welcomed home by every one, whom, in going to church, he had not an opportunity of speaking to, his eye was restlessly turned towards the door, from which in due time the laird, Miss Mizy, and Mary, made their appearance.

Time had now laid so many years on the shoulders of the laird, that he stooped and tottered beneath the load. He no longer wore his hands in his pockets; but with one arm leant on his daughter's, while he supported himself by the other with a tall gold-headed cane, from which dangled a leathern string and tassel considerably above his grasp. Miss Mizy had also some difficulty in moving under the weight of age. Her lean and scraggy figure seemed considerably more awry than formerly; her steps were much shorter and quicker, though she made less way; and her head nodded with a loose and unsettled oscillation, which, even in the energy of scolding the maids, could not be described as emphatic. But Mary Cunningham, though long fully developed into an elegant woman, was still in the pride of beauty. The liveliness of her air was, however, mellowed into a serene and gracious benignity, and it was a Sabbathly theme of regret and wonder to the parishioners, that such an heiress should remain so long single.

The moment that Sir Andrew saw "the family" coming, he went towards them with a slight feeling of trepidation. The laird shook him cordially by the hand; Miss Mizy also welcomed him with uncommon briskness; and Miss Cunningham herself looked so pleased, that it was observed by some of the shrewd observers around them, that "mair strange things had come to

pass than that Andrew Wylie should be married to Craiglands' dochter," an event, in their opinion, which would be a far greater promotion than his seat in parliament, or the honour of his baronetcy.

Sir Andrew walked with the family down the churchyard, towards a stile which led into the highway, considerably nearer "The Place" than the gate that opened into the village. In going along a footpath that winded among the graves, they happened to pass by the tombstone where he had so faithfully been attended in his task by Mary, and with an instinctive glance he observed that she threw her eye on it, and that a slight cast of thoughtfulness at the moment overshadowed her countenance.

"It's something the waur of the wear since yon time," said he softly to her, and her face, in an instant, was covered with blushes.

But, with considerable spirit and gayety, she retorted, "And I doubt you have forgotten some of your fifty psalms."

Nothing more passed at that time, for the laird interposing, said to him, "I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll no object to tak your kail wi' us; but my sister wasna fond to bid you, 'cause we hae only a head and pluck, and a cauld hen; but I ken that ane of Snoodle the China sow's wee grumphies was killed yestreen, and gin ye'll promise to intermit with us, just in the way of pat-luck, we'll get it roasted by the time that divine service is ower in the afternoon. What say ye? I hope and wish ye would come; for it's a great pleasance to me to see and hear of a lad from our ain gait-end, that has done so weel as they say ye hae; so I expect ye'll no be blate, but just use your freedom, and tak a bit neighbourly chack o' dinner."

Our hero was delighted with the invitation, and getting at once into the old man's humour, said, with a drolling accent, and a significant nod both to Mary and her aunt, "If it's no a sin, laird, to dine out on the Sabbath-day, I'm sure I'll be right blithe to dine wi' you at the Craiglands; but I maun first tell grannie, for fear she should be angry."

"That's a' very right, my man," replied the laird, in something like an affectionate manner; "for she did muckle for you; but I understand ye hae been a kind and dutiful bairn. Howsomever, I hope ye'll come to us."

"I think, brother," said Miss Mizy, "that ye might as well bid old Martha likewise; for ye ken she's now a woman of some degree, Sir Andrew being a baronet, forbye a member of parliament."

"That's very true, Mizy; and she's a decent creature, though a wee overly pridefu'," replied the laird; "so I hope, Sir Andrew, ye'll bring your grannie wi' you. We'll be very content to see her; for I understand Mary Cunningham, my daughter, has a great opinion of her prudence and judgment; and ye ken she got no sma' insight o' character at Mrs Perjink's boarding-school in Emburrough, where she was to the outside of three years, whereby she cost me mair ilk year than Doctor Dozadeal had for his stipend before the augmentation."

Miss Cunningham, not much relishing this dissertation of her father, pressed his arm to induce the old gentleman to desist; but this only made things worse, for he said, "Na, na, Mary, ye needna chirt my arm, for ye ken weel it's true: and yet for a' that, Sir Andrew, ye see she hasna gotten a man, although she's a hantle mair weel faur't, and will hae ten times the tocher o' her mither."

"Ay, but, laird," replied our hero pawkily, "young leddies in her mother's time, I'm thinking, weren a sae nice as they're noo-a-days."

"Ah! ye ken naething about it—ye ne'er was farther aff your eggs in thinking sae," replied the laird; "for I can assure you, Sir Andrew, that her mother was just a sorrow to court; for although she was the seventh dochter of poor Beevesland, there never was sic a flyting heard in a house, as there was before she would consent to tak me; although her father, as ye aiblins hae heard, was drownt wi' debt by the Ayr bank, and though the downseat of the Craighlands was an almous deed to the best tocher'd lass at the time, either in Carrick, Coil, or Cunningham."

In this sort of "daunering conversation," as our hero called it, they reached the stile, where he assisted the two ladies and the laird over, and was surprised to find a handsome carriage waiting to receive them. But though the equipage was in a tasteful modern style, the horses and the coachman were in the old slovenliness of the Craighlands. The horses were unmatched,

the one being black and the other bay, and they appeared as rough and shaggy as if they had been taken from the grass that morning, and harnessed without being groomed, which was probably the fact. Old Robin Taigle, the laird's man, performed as many offices as Scrub in the play; and was riding postilion without boots, in coarse grey worsted stockings, with a straw-rope round his off-side leg, to protect it from being chafed by the pole—indubitable proofs that it was extremely probable he had not time, or "couldna be fashed" that morning to attend either to himself or the horses.

Having handed the ladies, and also assisted the laird into the carriage, Andrew retired, and Robin, with a loud cry of "Jee, brutes!" set off at a sober rate towards "The Place;" while Miss Mizy, putting her head out at the carriage-window, said, "Mind, noo, Sir Andrew, that we'll expect to see both you and your grandmother, and ye'll tak a hearty welcome for good cheer."

Our hero, as this stately equipage drove away, stood two or three minutes looking after it, and thought, for the first time in his life, that it was no longer a foolish thing to even himself with Mary Cunningham.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

DAFT JAMIE.

"ISNA that a dreadfu' fine coach?" said a voice behind Sir Andrew, as he still continued looking after the carriage. "I'se warrant ye ne'er saw the like o't in Lunnon—though the king's there."

Our hero was a little startled by this salutation, and turning round, beheld daft Jamie standing on the steps of the stile, dressed in an old cavalry jacket. On his head was the crown of a hat, cut into something like a soldier's cap; his neck and legs were bare, and his whole appearance betokened the military vanity of harmless idiocy.

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Jamie was neither of the aborigines of the parish, nor a native of Ayrshire, however celebrated that county may be for the production of such worthies. In our hero's time he was not known at Stoneyholm, where, indeed, he was only an occasional visiter, in consequence of making it one of his resting-places in his professional journeys to the periodical reviews of the garrisons of Glasgow and Ayr. His favourite haunt was Greenock, and for the best of all possible reasons, because, as he said, "the folk there were just like himsel'."

It was his custom, however, when he happened to be at Stoneyholm on Sunday, to follow "the family" from the church to the stile, and to assist the laird into the carriage, for which he was usually rewarded by the ladies with a penny. But on this occasion, as they were squired by Sir Andrew, to whom the attention of the crowd was so particularly directed, and whom he heard spoken of as having come from London with "a power of money," Jamie diffidently kept aloof till the carriage drove off, when, seeing our hero following it with his eye, he naturally imagined that it was in admiration of its splendour.

Sir Andrew, as we have observed, was a little startled at Jamie's salutation; but perceiving what sort of personage he had to deal with, he replied, "Ay, it's a braw coach."

Jamie, encouraged by the familiarity of this answer, came down from the stile, and looking queerly in his face, said, "The leddies didna gie you ony bawbees, but ye're to get your dinner. They baith gie me bawbees and my dinner."

"That's because ye're a captain, ye ken," replied the baronet.

"I'm thinking," said Jamie, echoing the opinions he had heard in the churchyard, "ye should make up to ane o' the leddies. I hae had a thought o't man, mair than ance mysel'; but I'm no sure whilk to tak'."

"Is that possible?" exclaimed Sir Andrew.

"Deed is't," said Jamie; "for though Miss Mary's the bonniest, Miss Mizy keeps the keys, and I'm desperate keen of flesh and tarts. But I'll tell you something; if ye'll speak a gude word for me, I'll do as muckle for you; for I would like unco weel to hurl in that braw coach, and walk my body wi' a golden-headed cane like the laird."

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"A bargain be't," said Sir Andrew laughing; "I'll no fail to do my best for you with Miss Mizy."

"And what for no wi' Miss Mary?" said Jamie, looking at him peeringly; and then he cried, "O ho, my hearty, is that the way the land lies already! Howsomever, there's my hand, through foul or fair—eyes right, and look to your officer."

There was something in this little scene which made our hero feel dissatisfied with himself. He had not given the idiot credit for half the discernment he possessed, and to be quit of him took out a sixpence, and giving it hastily to Jamie, turned and walked away.

As Sir Andrew ascended the steps of the stile, and went home to his grandmother's cottage through the churchyard, Jamie ran leaping and exulting, holding the sixpence aloft between his finger and thumb, straight on to The Place, where he arrived just as the carriage was driving off after setting down the family.

"What's making you so glad the day, Jamie?" said Mary to him, who was still standing at the door.

"Do you see what I hae got?" was the reply, showing the sixpence; and adding, "noo, I'll hae ay or no frae Miss Mizy—and if she'll no tak me, then I'll tak you. But na; I canna do that noo, honour, honour—that puts an end, Miss Mary, to a' your hopes o' me."

"Ye're certainly, I see," said Miss Cunningham laughingly, "a rich match, indeed; but who gave you the sixpence?"

"The wee man wi' the muckle purse; but I'm no at liberty to say ony mair; so speer nae questions, and I'll tell nae lies!" replied Jamie. "But, Miss Mary, he's a fine bit body yon—I wonder ye canna tak a fancy till't—eh, Miss Mary, he's just like a bonny wee china pourie, full o' thick ream. Ye would lick your lips an' ye kent what I ken—I redd ye, Miss Mary, to mak' muckle o' him, or I wouldna be surprised an' he fuff'd awa' wi' a' his goud and gear to Miss Jenny Templeton o' the Braehead, that's got the tocher frae Indy. Oh, she's a sonsy, rosy cheekit lass! I would like to hae a sheep's head wi' as gude a cuff o' the neck. He'll get a bien bargain that gets Miss Jenny."

Miss Cunningham, amazed and surprised at this speech, said, "But, Jamie, what makes you think the wee man wi' the muckle purse is likely to prefer me first to Miss Jenny Templeton?"

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"That's a question amang divines, Miss Mary," replied Jamie. "But if I were in your place, when he's getting his dinner wi' you the day, I would gie him the tappy-tourock o' the pie, and the best leg o' the fat hen; and wha kens what may be the upshot!"

"But, Jamie," said Miss Cunningham, "this is not leap-year. The ladies are not free to court but in leap-years."

"That may be the rule, Miss Mary, in ordinary times. But men's growing scarce—the regiment that's noo at Ayr, is under orders for America; they'll tak a whole thousand awa' themselves—and, gin the war continues lang, ye'll hardly get a lad in time for love or money, so I wad be overly particular about leap-years; especially when sic a godsend has come to your doors as yon nice couthy Lunnnon body;—they say he has a purse o' gold as big as a boll o' potatoes."

"Come in, Mary Cunningham," cried Miss Mizy from the parlour, "and dinna stand clishmaclavering with that haverel there on the Sabbath-day."

"I'm thinking, Miss Mizy, ye'll hae to mend your manners," retorted Jamie: "I may be a haverel, but every body kens what ye're."

"Come ben, and close the door immediatly," said the maiden lady, still more sharply; at which words Jamie rushed past Miss Cunningham, and looking into the parlour where Miss Mizy was sitting with the laird, said, "'I hae a saxpence under my thumb, and I'll get credit in ilka town;' so, Miss Mizy, ye may look to yoursel'. The poor man gets aye a poor marriage, and when I had naething I was fain to draw up wi' you. But the world's changed noo—I'm for a las. wi' a lump o' land, and a young ane too, Miss Mizy. Howsomer, no to mak' a rent and a rive o't a'thegither between us, gin ye hae the shackle-bane o' a mutton ham, I'll find a corner near my heart for a' the flesh on't along wi' your kindness, Miss Mizy—for I'm growing yawp, and hunger, though it's gude kitchen to a cauld potato, is a wet divot to the low o' love."

"Weel, weel, Jamie, gang but the house, and see what the lasses hae got in the pantry," said Miss Mizy; while the laird,

with whom Jamie was a favourite, gave one of these sudden great roaring laughs, which are so well known by the generic term of a guffaw, observing, when he stopped, which he did almost as abruptly as he began, "Really, he's a ready-witted fool that."

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE LAIRD'S DRAWING-ROOM.

WHEN Sir Andrew returned to his grandmother's cottage, and informed her how he had been pressed, both by the laird himself and Miss Mizy, to bring her with him to dinner, she said, "It's a great honour and testification, my lad, that ye should be invited to dine at The Place; and no you only, but even me. I never thought to see the like o' that; but ye maunna be overly lifted up wi't."

"But will ye come wi' me? What say ye to that, grannie?"

"Deed no, my bairn," was the judicious and humble reply; "I'm no used to the ceremonials at the banquetings o' the great, and I'm ouer auld noo to learn; but I'm blithe and thankful to see sae great a respect paid to you; for wha that has seen the eydent hand and unwearied foot wi' which I have so long ca'd at my wheel, no to be a cess, would ever hae thought that I would be requeeshted to tak my dinner in the Craiglands dining-room wi' the family."

Our hero felt his heart glow with veneration at the motives by which his grandmother was actuated, and he sat for some time in silence; at last he said, "I'm nae dout vera muckle obligated to the laird for his civeelity; but—and I dinna say it out of ostentation and vanity—I may take my place with him at the same board ony where, and no be thought an intruder; and therefore, if it wasna putting you to an excess o' trouble, I wish ye would go with me to The Place."

"If it's to pleasure you, Andrew, as it's your welcome hame,

I'll no make an obstacle wi' my ain objections; but ye ken the laird himself, poor silly carle, has an unco rouse o' his family; and Miss Mizy, though she's vera discreet in some things, looks down on a' poor folk, and was ne'er overly weel pleased when Miss Mary visited me with her hamely familiarity. Howsever, I'll gang wi' ye, but I would amaist tak it a kindness if ye didna insist."

Our hero, however, had a motive in pressing her acceptance of the invitation; for, retaining a distinct recollection of the peculiarities both of the laird and Miss Mizy, he was desirous to see how far they had infected Mary with their prejudices; being determined to make her behaviour towards his venerable parent in some measure a test of her character, in order to govern himself in the indulgence of that regard which, although at no period so strong as to merit the epithet of passion, was undoubtedly warmer, while it was as constant as fraternal affection.

Accordingly, at the close of the afternoon service, his grandmother, on his reiterated request, walked with him to the mansion-house. On approaching the well-known entrance to the avenue which opened from the high-road, he was struck with the air of renovation which every object had been made to assume. The square pillars were not only rebuilt, but the two stone globes, which had lain for many years on the ground, were replaced on their summits. The iron gates, which had not been painted for years before his young remembrance—and one of which had long fallen from its hinges, and been drawn aside from its proper station—shone in the fairest white, and swung harmoniously in their proper places. The avenue itself had also undergone a prodigious improvement. It was considerably smoother and better defined along the margin than the king's highway, which was not the case before his departure for London; and the mansion itself had not only received a dazzling white-washing, but the sashes of several of the windows were renewed. Instead, however, of three small windows on each side of the door, as formerly, there was now but one, in the Venetian taste—a contrivance suggested by Miss Mizy to evade the window-tax, when the ever-memorable triple assessment was proposed. The Place had indeed received very extensive, and even some radical

reformations, and not only bore testimony to the improved spirit of the age, but indicated something of the taste which Mary had acquired during her residence in Edinburgh, and of the influence which she possessed over her father. But it seemed, to the enlarged sight of our hero, to have shrunk prodigiously from its former grandeur, although it was certainly, for Scotland, still a respectable country seat.

Sir Andrew and his grandmother, on arriving at the door, were shown into the drawing-room by Robin Taigle, now acting in the capacity of footman, having put up his horses. Miss Mizy thought there was no need to be so ceremonious, and the laird himself said it was a work of supererogation; but Mary overruled their objections, by reminding her aunt of the free footing in which they had found our hero among the great in London. Accordingly, the drawing-room window-shutters, which had not been opened for at least a fortnight before, were unclosed; and, as we have said, the guests shown into it by the laird's man.

The drawing-room of the Craiglunds, though without question the most splendid apartment in the whole parish of Stoneholm, and in the opinion of old Martha, "just a palace," could really boast of no very remarkable ornaments, either of decoration or of art. It contained a large unwieldy settee, of coeval antiquity with the first introduction of that species of recumbency into the west of Scotland, being one of the relics of the furniture which the laird's great-grandfather procured for The Place when he changed the ancient castle into a mansion. It had originally been covered with needlework, the skilful endeavour of the then Lady Craiglunds and her five daughters to imitate flowers and peacocks, in which they succeeded almost as well, both in effect and design, as the Greenock sculptor who carved the celebrated effigy of Vulcan in the Vennel of that classical town. But Minerva, envious of their success, having, in the shape of many shoulders, worn several holes in the work, the sofa was at this period covered with simple white dimity, as were also the cushions of the chairs.

The walls of the room were stained with green, the most extravagant of all colours, as Miss Mizy told the visitors who

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admired it; and over the chimney hung a map of Europe, worked on white satin by Mary, at Mrs Perjink's boarding-school in Edinburgh, which her father assured his friends was most curiously particular, though France happened to be omitted, either in consequence of the governess believing that Mr Burke declared a fact when he said, "France was struck out of the map," or because in drawing the outline she had omitted to leave room to insert it. On each side of this splendid display of Penelopian industry and geographical knowledge, hung two paintings, which were paid for as likenesses of the laird and his lady in the halcyon days of their bridal beauty; but with what propriety was never satisfactorily ascertained: Craiglands himself, however, affirmed, that the mole on his wife's cheek was as natural as life, and the scar on the back of his own hand could not be better represented. Along the wall fronting the window hung twelve ancient coloured mezzotinto engravings, in black frames, representing, with all their appropriate symbols, the twelve months of the year; the glasses of several were cracked, and a star-shaped fracture over the face of the blooming May was ingeniously mended by a piece of putty, which entirely concealed her smiles and her beauty. These also were relics of the grand days of the Craiglands; and the like of them, according to the traditions of the family, were not in all Scotland when they were first brought to it. There was but one other ornament on the walls, and that was a looking-glass behind the door, and opposite to the fireplace; it was a French plate of considerable dimensions, set in a frame of small ones with gilded rims, so shaped and arranged as to present some almost hieroglyphical indication of leaves and roses; and underneath this pride and glory of the Craiglands stood a second-hand harpsichord, that had been purchased at Edinburgh for Mary, at the enormous cost, as the laird often repeated, of ten pounds seven shillings, besides the box, and the expense of bringing it to the Craiglands.

CHAPTER XC.

THE LANDED INTEREST.

THE laird was alone in the drawing-room when Sir Andrew and his grandmother entered; and upon their appearance, without moving from his chair, said, "Come awa, Martha, and tak a seat. I am very well pleased to see you and your grandson, whom I am happy to hear is a weel-doing lad, and likely to be a great comfort to your auld age."

Sir Andrew felt his blood stir a little at the rude superciliousness of this reception—but the supercilions, however refined, are always rude—and, compassionating the laird's obtuse ignorance and indolence, he soon subdued the heat of the moment, and wisely resolved to make a visit, which he apprehended might otherwise tax his humility, a source, if possible, of amusement. Accordingly he took his seat modestly at some distance from the laird, whom he slyly drew into conversation, by commending the manifold and visible improvements which had taken place in the country during his absence. With all which Craiglands expressed the most satisfactory acquiescence, till the Baronet, in an unguarded moment, happened, among the topics of his commendation, to advert to the diffusion of opulence by the introduction of the cotton-manufactures.

"Ah! Sir Andrew," said that illuminated political economist, "it was a black day when poor Scotland saw the incoming pestilence of the cotton jennies. The reformers and them were baith cleikit at the same time, and they'll live and thrive, and I hope will be damn'd thegither."

"Wheesht, wheesht, laird!" exclaimed the old woman; "that's an awfu' word—remember the Sabbath-day."

"Remember the deevil!" cried this worthy member of the landed interest. "Isna what I say a God's truth? The vera weavers in Glasgow and Paisley hae houses, I'm told, that the Craiglands here wouldna be a byre to. Can ony gude come, but vice and immorality, from sic upsetting in a Christian kingdom?—What would ye think, Sir Andrew, one o' the trash,

Macandoe, a manufacturer, had the impudence to bid against my lord at the roup of the Friersland, and not only outbid his man o' business, but even Major Hyder, the nabob from India."

"That," replied the baronet, "was indeed vera surprising, laird; sic a thing wouldna hae happened in the days of my youth, nor in times afore them. But I dinna think the Major o' ony better stock than Mr Macandoe: for his father, ye ken, was the town-drummer of Kilmaining, and he himself, as I hae heard, listed as a common soldier at the outbreaking o' the American war."

"Ye're no far wrang in some particulars," interrupted the laird; "but he raised himsel' by his merits in the service of his king and country, and made his fortune in the wars o' India, which is an unco difference to cotton-spinning."

"Ay, there's some truth in that, laird," replied our hero. "But what's the story o' this Macandoe?"

"Story! poogh.—He was the get of a Kilwinning weaver," said Craiglands, "and gaed intil Glasgow when the cotton-warks began, where he got credit; but whether by stealing clues, or setting windmill bills agoing, I never heard the rights o'. When he took possession of the Friersland, I was obligated, out o' the respect due to my family, to buy a chaise; for he has got one, and wi' horses and flunkeys too, that they say my lord himsel' hasna the like o'. It's enough, Sir Andrew, to gar a bodie scunner to hear o' weavers in coaches, wi' flunkeys ahint them. Mary would fain hae had me to cultivate a visitation-acquaintance with him; for, as she said, Mrs Macandoe didna want sense, and one of their dochters was at the Edinburgh school, learning manners wi' her, and was a fine lassie; but I would as soon sit in a Relief kirk, as darken the door o' ony sic cattle."

"Ay, but, laird," interposed the old woman, "there has been a growth o' many comforts since the cotton-warks were brought in. There's Jenny Eydent, when her gudeman brak, and die't o' a broken heart, in the calamity o' the Ayr bank, she was left wi' a sma' family o' seven weans, five dochters, and twa twin-babies o' lad bairns, and no help but her ten fingers. See what she has been enabled to do by the tambouring. There's no a

better clad, or a better bred family in a' the kintra side. Miss Janet, her second dochter, a weel-faur't lassie, was cried the day, for a purpose o' marriage with John Sailfar, that's noo a captain of a three-mastit ship frae Greenock; and her son Willy, that's so douce and comely in the kirk, to the pleasure of every body that sees him, is gaun intill Glasgow to learn to be a minister; for the cotton-works hae made that, whilk in my day would hae been a sore burden, a stock in trade o' mony hands, whom the Lord has blessed with thriftiness and prosperity."

"Ay, but, grannie, ye ken," said Sir Andrew pawkily, "what a rise has since been in the price of butter and cheese—that, to be sure, may have gi'en a lift to the rent o' land; but then the day-labourer's wage it's doubled, and coats and hats are twa prices."

"Really, Sir Andrew," replied the laird, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and giving one of his inordinate guffaws, "I havena heard sic a gospel-truth for a long time. But they tell me ye're wonderfu' clever, and surely that observe was a proof and testimony of the same. Come, draw your chair closer to mine; for I'm fashed wi' a rheumateese in my arm, and canna thole to converse ouer my shoulder."

At this juncture Miss Mizy came into the room, and passing old Martha, took her place in the seat of honour, facing her brother, before she spoke. Our hero, who had begun to gain a little in the laird's good opinion, was somewhat disconcerted by this rudeness, and drew no favourable augury of the manners of Mary, who had not yet made her appearance. The fact was, that, after their return from church, Miss Cunningham, whether influenced by the exhortation of daft Jamie, or by the manners she had learned at Edinburgh, induced her aunt, in consideration of the rank of their guest, to make some additions to the dinner beyond the pig, which the laird himself had ordered to be roasted; and in the superintendence and direction of the same, the ladies had in the mean time been employed.

"Sister," said the laird to Miss Mizy when she had taken her seat, "I'm vastly weel pleased with this lad's sense and discretion."

"Dear me, brother," replied the lady eagerly, "ye forget that

he's noo a baronet, and a great parliament man;" and turning with a smirk to our hero, she added, "Sir Andrew, ye ken the laird's jocose way, and ye'll no tak it ill if he should noo and then negleck your teetle."

"O no, Miss Mizy! the laird and I are no acquaintance of yesterday, and we can bear muckle wi' ane another for auld lang syne."

"Andrew Wylie," cried his grandmother, "how can ye break the Lord's day by speaking o' songs, and the like o' sic daffing?"

At this crisis Mary entered the room, with her complexion somewhat heightened; but whether from any moral or physical cause—whether from sentiments connected with seeing our hero an honoured guest in her father's house, or from the reflection of the kitchen-fire, in consequence of her presence being requisite to direct the maids in some of the nicer culinary mysteries, that the occasion had made her desirous to see properly performed, is a question that we shall not attempt to settle. The blush, however, of the moment, lost none of its gracefulness by the manner in which she went to old Martha, and said, "I am glad to see you, and happy that you have come with"—and she hesitated for an instant, and then added—"your grandson."

She afterwards turned to the baronet, and with a gay but somewhat embarrassed air, said, "Sir Andrew, I fear yon great London folks will have spoiled your relish for our plain country fare?"

"The company," replied Sir Andrew gallantly, "should aye be the best dainties at a' banquets; and the head and pluck, with the sooking grumphy that your father promised, canna fail to please, with Miss Mizy's sauce and your garnishing."

There was a little tendency to a pun in this, which Miss Cunningham perceived and perfectly understood; but her aunt took it as a compliment, while the laird threw himself back in his chair, and roared his delight with one of his heartiest and most ungovernable peals of laughter, declaring, when he stopped, that he had not heard sic a funny saying he didna ken when.

When dinner was announced, Sir Andrew stepped forward two or three paces to give Miss Mizy his arm; but suddenly,

remembering in what lofty company he then was, he retired back, and followed his grandmother, whom the laird left behind.

Miss Mary probably guessed the object of our hero's alertness and sudden halt; for, instead of going on after her father, as the usual routine of their procession from the drawing-room was on company occasions, at Pace, and Yule, and high times, she abruptly stepped aside, and turning back to the mantelpiece, as if to look for something, contrived to allow Martha and Sir Andrew to enter the dining-room some time before her. Thus, without giving any cause for observation, delicately performing that homage which is due to invited guests.

CHAPTER XCI.

BREAKING THE ICE.

In the mean time, Lord and Lady Sandymford, after parting from our hero, had pursued their journey to Auchinward, where they arrived about the same time that he reached Stoneyholm. Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret were delighted to see them; and when informed of the secret object of their visit, and of the motives by which their noble friends were actuated towards Sir Andrew, who was described as the architect of their happiness, they entered with zeal and alacrity into their views. They told them, however, that Miss Cunningham had the reputation of being exceedingly proud and consequential—the failing, indeed, of the Craighands family; and that she had already refused some of the best matches in the county.

“As the figure of Sir Andrew,” said Sir Archibald, “is not likely to recommend him to a lady’s eye, I fear, considering also his low origin, that the undertaking will be more difficult than you imagine. The journey, however, will probably, in other respects, be of advantage to him; for, if he is decidedly refused, or perhaps disgusted, in consequence of the change that may

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The countess replied, "There is much in what you say, Sir Archibald, and were our friend an ordinary man, the justness of your observations would make me despair of the business. But there is so much heart about him—he is all heart—that, I do believe, were he to be rejected by Miss Cunningham, he would soon sink into despondency. From what I have observed of his earnest and persevering character, I am persuaded, that if she was not the sole object of his ambition, her image constituted no inconsiderable portion of the motives by which he has pursued, with so much constancy and consistency, one distinct and clearly defined course of life. Had he been animated with the vanity of making a figure in the world, he would certainly have more studied worldly manners; and avarice cannot be considered as even entering into his character, for on all proper occasions he acts with a princely liberality. Nothing but love can account for the care with which, it may be said, he has preserved his original simplicity, and the indifference with which he has seen so many beautiful women, who would have been proud of his hand."

The earl, who was listening with delighted ears to the warmth of his lady's eulogium, said, "Why, Augusta, you will make out that Jacob's servitude of fourteen years, and another wife in the meanwhile, was nothing compared with the constancy of our little baronet."

"Jacob's story," interposed Lady Margaret, somewhat gravely, "is at least a corroboration of her ladyship's opinion; and I hope that opinion is well founded. But I do not think the case at all so problematical as Sir Archibald seems to think it. Women are not so often ruled in their affections by figure, as they are accused of being;" and she added, in a gayer style, "we are domestic animals, and the fireside virtues gain more upon us than more showy qualities; especially when we are, like Miss Cunningham, arrived at years of discretion."

"Indeed!" said the earl, in a lively tone; "and pray, Lady Margaret, when do women arrive at years of discretion?"

"You must ask some one older than she is," replied Sir Archibald, with a laugh.

"Not so," said the countess; "I can answer for a portion of my sex. A married woman's years of discretion begin when she feels herself dependent on her husband. But to return to the point—Do you visit at the Craiglunds family?"

"We call sometimes, and the ladies occasionally come here," was the reply; "but the laird is such an exception to the world in general, that there is no venturing to ask him to meet strangers."

"How then shall I get introduced to him," said the earl, "if you do not invite him?"

"O, that can be easily managed!" cried Sir Archibald; "if you think fit, we can ride over to-morrow after sermon, and as if incidentally call. Besides, I should like to be introduced to Sir Andrew; I should like, indeed, at once to show the laird in what degree of esteem and respect he is held by his friends. I wish you had brought him with you here; and, of course, on your account, I will at all hazards invite Craiglunds."

"We urged Sir Andrew to come all that we could," rejoined Lady Sanddyford; "but he was firm and faithful to his own resolution; apprehensive, if he came here, that his grandmother might think he had lost his respect for her."

"You might have given a more romantic colouring to his motive," said the earl, "and perhaps been quite as near the truth, by saying, that perhaps he wished to take a peep at Miss Cunningham, before she could have any reason to suspect the object of his journey."

"At all events, my lord, it can do no harm," replied Lady Margaret, "if the countess and I go with your lordship and Sir Archibald to-morrow."

"I should like it of all things," said Lady Sanddyford; "for I intend to visit his grandmother. It is a tribute of respect due to the genuine worth of one that continued to form a character of so much probity and feeling as Sir Andrew."

It was accordingly arranged, that instead of returning home from their parish church after service, on the day following, Sir Archibald and his lady, with their guests, should drive over before dinner to Stoneyholm; and in the fulfilment of this intention, they reached the Craiglunds gate just as the laird had

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mumbled grace inwardly to himself, and the party had taken their seats at the dinner table. Few visits, in consequence, as both Mizy and her brother remarked, were ever more ill-timed, for the dinner would be spoiled, as it was not possible to allow visitors of such a degree to wait; another embarrassment arose as to what they should do with their guests, for it was absolutely necessary that the laird should attend Sir Archibald and the stranger; and no less so, as Miss Mizy observed, that she and Mary should go to the ladies. This dilemma was, however, speedily obviated by Mary, with promptitude and grace, saying firmly, that she would remain at table, while her aunt and father went to the visitors, who, on alighting from their carriage, had been shown into the drawing-room.

"You gentry, Miss Mary," said old Martha, when the laird and Miss Mizy had left the dining-room, "hae a sore time o't wi' a' this ceremonial, and"—

But she was interrupted by one of the maids looking in at the door, and crying, in a sort of loud under voice of admiration, "Eh! Miss Mary, it's an English yerl and his leddy—a delightful creature."

Upon which our hero immediately said, "Lord and Lady Sandyford; they are just now on a visit to Auchinward."

"What ken ye o' lords and leddies, Andrew?" exclaimed the old woman; when Mary immediately replied,

"I suspect much more than he gets credit for among us. But prophets are never respected in their own country; and Sir Andrew is as likely in Stoneyholm to be spoken of by his old title as by his new one;" and turning round to him, she said playfully, "have you forgotten it, Wheelie?"

"No; nor when you last called me by it in the streets of Edinburgh, as I was on my way to London."

Miss Cunningham blushed; but the look which she cast towards him, was so much in the sprightly manner of their old familiarity, that it told him even Craiglands' daughter then no longer felt that disparity in their condition, which he once thought would never perhaps be overcome.

CHAPTER XCII.

PRELIMINARIES.

AFTER the reciprocities of the introduction were over, Lord Sandysford, who had previously determined to be all suavity and conciliation, was so tempted by the obvious peculiarities of the laird and Miss Mizy, that he could not refrain from amusing himself a little at their expense. And accordingly he enquired, with much apparent gravity, if the pictures of Craighlands and his lady, which we have already described, were the portraits of Voltaire and the King of Prussia. The countess, however, soon checked him, by asking the laird if he had seen Sir Andrew.

"Atweel we hae seen him; he's noo with his grandmother in the other room. The poor lad, I have understood, is weel to do, and we could do nae less than gie him some countenance."

"But what has become of Miss Cunningham?" enquired Lady Margaret. "I should have been happy to have had an opportunity of making her acquainted with Lady Sandysford."

"She's ben the house with the baronet and his grandmother," replied Miss Mizy.

"Sister," cried the laird, "gang and tell her to come but to see my leddy."

"Ye ken," said Miss Mizy, winking to her brother, "that she cannot with propriety leave our guests by themselves."

"What for no? Surely we're no to stand on such pernicketies wi' the like o' Martha Dooken and her oye."

The earl and countess exchanged looks with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret.

But his lordship in a moment said, "I beg you will not request Miss Cunningham to leave your friends. Sir Andrew Wylie is a person of such personal worth, that neither Lady Sandysford nor I could possibly allow ourselves to be the cause of any thing towards him that might be construed into a want of due consideration for his high character and extraordinary talents."

The laird did not very well understand this, nor what answer

to make to the earl; but he was relieved from his embarrassment by Sir Archibald, saying, "It was our intention to have paid our respects to the baronet, and to invite him to dine at Auchinward to-morrow, where perhaps, Craighlands, you will do us the favour to accompany him."

Lady Margaret at the same time addressed herself to Miss Mizy, and expressed her hope that she was not engaged, and would, with Miss Cunningham, be of the party. Miss Mizy at once accepted the invitation; but the laird was not altogether pleased to find our hero considered so much on an equality with himself, and seemed reluctant to consent.

"Ye maun excuse me the morn, Sir Archibald," said he, "for it's no vera convenient to me just at this juncture."

The earl, suspecting the motive of the laird's hesitation, said adroitly to the countess, "If Mr Cunningham cannot come, it will be unnecessary to send the carriage for Sir Andrew, as the ladies will perhaps bring the baronet with them."

Miss Mizy, who, from the time she had been conciliated by our hero in London, considered him in a favourable light, was not, however, prepared to go such lengths at once as this, and with considerable dexterity replied, addressing Sir Archibald, "My brother will see how he is the morn, and if the weather's good, he'll maybe come with us."

The visitors were at no loss to ascribe this evasion to the proper motive. But Miss Mizy was not allowed to get off so easily; for Lady Margaret said to the countess, "You had still as well send your coach. It will bring the whole party; and perhaps Miss Mizy, in that case, will have the kindness to make my compliments to the baronet's grandmother, and say I shall be happy to see her along with them."

The laird and his sister were equally confounded, and knew not well what answer to make, when the earl said, "I think, as Sir Andrew and the old lady is in the house, the business should be settled at once."

"Ledly! Martha Docken a ledly!" thought Craighlands to himself.

"Ledly! Martha Docken a ledly!" thought Miss Mizy also. But the current, into which their wandering thoughts were

running, was stopped by Sir Archibald asking the earl, if his lordship could use the freedom with his friend the baronet to disturb him while at dinner, for otherwise the object of their drive to Stoneyholm would be frustrated. This reminded Lord Sandymford that they had drawn the laird and Miss Mizy from the table, and with his most gracious and conciliatory manner, he expressed his regret to have been the cause of disturbing them. He then turned to Sir Archibald, and with the best look and voice of sincerity that he could assume, he added, "Although my friend, Sir Andrew, is one of the best-humoured men living, yet, considering the distinction and deference to which he is accustomed, I should almost hesitate to take so great a liberty. But perhaps this lady," said his lordship, turning to Miss Mizy, "will take the trouble, merely in an incidental manner, to let him know that Lady Sandymford is in the house. He will come at once, I know, to see her ladyship."

It was with some difficulty that the countess and Lady Margaret could preserve their gravity, at seeing the vacant astonishment with which the laird and his sister exchanged looks, on hearing Martha Docken's grandson spoken of by an earl with such consideration.

Miss Mizy, however, without saying a word, rose, and going into the dining-room, told the baronet, with a degree of diffidence, which even old Martha herself observed, that Lord and Lady Sandymford were in the drawing-room, with Sir Archibald and Lady Margaret Maybole, who were desirous of being introduced to him.

Our hero, who was amused by the change in Miss Mizy's deportment, instantly rose, and joined the party in the drawing-room, from which he returned in the course of a few minutes, and said to Mary, "Miss Cunningham, you must grant me a favour. The Countess of Sandymford wishes to be introduced to you; allow me to lead you to her ladyship."

Mary rose instinctively, and Sir Andrew, in the moment, forgetting that he had as far as possible resumed his rustic manners, led her away by the hand, to the utter amazement of his grandmother, while Miss Mizy followed, leaving the old woman alone. Her surprise, however, was nothing to that of the laird, when he

saw them enter together; and especially when, after leading Mary to the countess, the earl introduced the baronet to Sir Archibald as his most particular and esteemed friend, and the person to whom, of all others, he considered himself under the greatest obligations. Lady Margaret was then introduced to him by Sir Archibald, when she expressed her wish that he would bring his grandmother with him to dinner next day.

"That, I fear, will not be in my power," was the reply. "She is an old woman, with very just and discreet notions of her condition, and I would be sorry to put her out of her own way; but of the honour, Lady Margaret, I am very deeply sensible."

It was then arranged that Lord Sandvford's carriage should be sent over next day to Stoneyholm, for Sir Andrew and the Craighlands family, and the visitors soon after retired. The earl proposed to the countess, before quitting the house, that they should be introduced to "the old lady;" but Sir Andrew interfered. "Not yet," said he. "It is necessary that I should prepare her in some degree for the honour you intend." And in saying these words, he handed her ladyship to the carriage.

On returning into the house, he accompanied the laird and the two ladies back to the dining-room, where Craighlands endeavoured against the grain to rouse himself into some feeling of deference and respect.

Nothing further of any consequence took place that afternoon. The baronet tried to entertain the laird by answering, as circumstantially as possible, his manifold enquiries respecting London, and seemed in some degree to gain upon his good-will; but there was a visible restraint on the whole party, and neither seemed to feel quite at ease. Miss Mizy was disconcerted; for the consideration which her noble visitors had shown towards her guests, she felt as a tacit reproof to her own deficiency; old Martha was evidently out of her element; and Mary Cunningham was sometimes absent and thoughtful, wondering in her own mind what was to be the issue of all the singular interest which the return of Wheelie seemed to excite.

CHAPTER XCIII.

CRIPPLE JANET.

IN the twilight Andrew walked home with his grandmother to her cottage, where he had invited the master to supper. As they were slowly plodding from the Craiglands gate to the village, the old woman, reverting to the occurrences of the day, exhorted him no to be lifted up, but to be of a lowly heart, and to walk soberly, and keep a steady hand, that he might be able "to carry the cup which the Lord had filled to overflowing. I never expected to live to see the day when I should sit down with you at Craiglands' table, and be treated on a footing with the family." But the baronet's mind was intent on other things, and much of her pious admonitions was heard unheeded, and left no trace behind.

As they approached the door of her humble dwelling, he observed an old woman with a staff in her hand sitting on the low dry stone wall which connected the cottage with its neighbour. She was in Sabbath cleanness, but her apparel was old and tattered; nevertheless, it presented some of the relics of better days. She wore a small black silk bonnet, embrowned with the sunshine of many summers: her cloak, which had once been scarlet, was changed into a dingy crimson, tattered and patched in several places, and her check apron, neat from the fold, was ragged, and old, and very mean.

When our hero and old Martha drew near, the modest beggar turned aside her face, as if ashamed that Sir Andrew should recognize her, while the place she had chosen showed that she was there patiently waiting his return home.

"Ye maun gie her saxpence, I'se warrant, Andrew," said Martha, on observing her, "for auld lang syne; poor body, she's noo greatly fail't. In her needcessity she was obligated to sell her wheel; indeed it was nae langer of ony use to her, for she had got an income in the right arm, and couldna spin."

"Who is't?" said the baronet, roused from his reverie by the observations of his grandmother.

"Poor cripple Janet, ye ken. Do ye no mind how you and Charlie Pierston keepit a stand wi' her at Kilwinning Fair? Mony a blithe night you and him had at her fireside, for she was aye kind to a' the laddies."

Sir Andrew felt a pang of inexpressible sorrow quiver through his heart at seeing the old woman in a state of beggary; but instead of giving her a sixpence, he went up to her, and shook her kindly by the hand. "It's a lang time, Janet, since you and me were marrows in the stand at the Fair," said he; "but I have had a better trade by the hand, and ye should be nane the waur o't. Grannie here tells me ye're no so able to work as ye were in yon days. I'm really sorry that I didna hear o' this sooner, but I'll try to mak up for't; only I think ye might hae gart the master drop me a line before it came to this."

Janet took up the tail of her apron, and wiping her eyes, which his kindness had made to overflow, said, "I couldna think o' fashing you; and I had a hope that it would hae pleased the Lord to take me to himsel', before it was his will, for my good hereafter, to bend me down to seek an almous frae ony body; but I couldna help it—auld age, and an aching arm, soon made my bit beild toom o' plenishing; and when a' was gone, what could I do, for I could neither work nor want?"

"Deed, Janet," replied Martha, "nobody says or thinks that it was idleset which brought you to the loan; for we a' ken it was a sore night that, afore ye could bring your mind to gang out in the morning. Many a saut tear and heavy heart was in the clachan that day, at the sight of one that had so long ettled to keep up an appearance, at last obliged to go from door to door. But, Janet, Andrew will do something for you, and I'm blithe to say it's in his power, as I hope he'll no lack of the inclination."

"Noo that I hae got the better o' the shame," replied the poor old creature, "I maun just wursle on; the neighbours are a' as kind to me as they can afford; I only trust that the Lord will no leave me to grow bedrid—that's noo a' in this world that I fear."

"But if he should," replied our hero cheeringly, "he'll send some kindly hand to help you."

"Ay, so I thought ance," said Janet, "and so I would fain

hope still, for he has been gracious to me even in beggary, disposing the hearts of every body to compassion and sympathy; but when Mrs Pierston gaed away frae the Woodside to live in Glasgow, I lost a good friend; she would ne'er hae alloo't me to die in neglect. However, poor leddy, she had her ain trials; for your old companion Charlie, her son, perished the pack, and they say has spoused his fortune and gone to Indy; I'm sure, gang where he will, a blessing will attend him, for he had a leal heart; and I hae a notion that mine wasna the sairest in the parish when we heard of his ganging abroad; for ever since Miss Mary Cunningham kent that it was me that keepit the stand at the fair for you and him, she's been aye kinder and kinder; and her and me has mony a crack about you and him, when I gang on the Saturdays to The Place."

"They would hae been a braw couple," said our hero's grandmother; "and I ne'er heard till noo a right because for Miss Mary being so skeigh to a' her other joes."

Andrew was not entirely pleased with this information; for although persuaded that no attachment had existed on the part of Pierston, it was possible that Mary Cunningham might have cherished some early affection for him; and he was on the point of turning away, in the absence of the moment produced by the remark of the old woman, when his grandmother again reminded him to give Janet something. Ashamed of his inattention, he immediately said, "No; my auld copartner maunna receive sic gifts ony mair;—Janet, ye'll come hame and tak' your supper wi' us; and as the maister's to be there, we'll consult wi' him what's best to be done for you."

"Na, na," exclaimed the poor old woman, bursting suddenly into tears, "I'll no do that; I canna noo sit down on an equality wi' ony body that I hae fashed for alms. I'll no disgrace neither you nor your grandmother wi' my company; but whatsoever you and the master are content to do for me, Ill tak' in thankfulness; but it has pleased the Lord to chastise me with the humiliation of beggary, and I'm resigned to his will. I would fain hope, however, that he'll no just carry his righteous dispensation so far as to leave me to perish 'like a dog at a dyke-side—that's noo a' my anxiety."

The baronet was deeply affected by the lowliness of this burst of affliction, and the honest sense of pride that it breathed.

Martha again assured the mendicant that she would be taken care of. "Though it werena in the power of Andrew," said she, "to do the needful, there's mony kindly neighbours, Janet, that respect you; and we a' think that what has been your case may be our ain, so ye shouldna be just so cast down, but come away and tak' a bit of our supper."

"No the night," replied Janet, drying her eyes—"no the night:" and rising from the wall on which she had been resting, she moved to go homeward, which was in a different direction from that of Martha's cottage.

Our hero then gave her what silver he had about him, saying, "Tak' that, Janet, for erles of something better; and be sure and come to grannie's in the morning."

The unhappy creature could not speak, but grasped his hands in both hers, and watered them with the tears of her gratitude.

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE FIRESIDE.

IN the mean time the Craighlands family were discussing the events of the day; and the laird was not the least dogmatical of the group, although, perhaps, not the wisest. "I dinna understand," said he, "a' this wark about Martha Docken's eye. That English lord and his leddy mak' him joke-fellow wi' themselves; but the Englishers, as it is weel known, are no overladen with discretion—that's a certain fact. But how Andrew came to the degree of a bauronet, is a thing I would fain hear the rights o'. However, I'm thinking that your bauronets noo-a-days are but, as a body would say, the scum that's cast uppermost in times o' war and trouble."

"Ay, but, brother," said Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew's a great and wealthy man, and a member of parliament; and ye hae

heard how Mary and me found him on a footing with the Duchess of Dashingwell, and a' the nobility, which was just confounding."

"Ye have said sae," replied the laird; "but every body kens that duchesses, especially o' the English breed, are nae better than they should be."

"But you forget, sir," interposed Mary, "that Lady Margaret is sister-in-law to her grace; and when she gave us letters to the duchess, she not only assured us that she was a lady of unblemished honour, but beloved and esteemed by all her friends."

"Ye wouldna surely hae had Leddy Margaret," said the laird, "to speak ill of her ain kith and kin."

"But Sir Andrew," resumed Miss Mizy, "has made a great fortune, and has bought the estate of Wylie."

"Is't paid for?" interrupted the laird. "I would like to ken that."

"I should think," said Mary diffidently, "that he must be a man of merit and ability; for you know, sir, that he had but his own conduct for his patron, and he has acquired both riches and honour."

"But how did he acquire them?" cried the laird sharply. "Any body may acquire riches and honour!—the road is open baith to gentle and semple. But, thanks be and praise, the democrats are no just able yet to mak' themselves men o' family."

"It is not likely that Sir Andrew is a democrat; neither his associates nor his inclinations, or I am much mistaken," replied Mary, "lie that way."

"Wha made you a judge?" exclaimed the laird.

"I do not affect any judgment in the matter," was the answer; "I only think"——

"What business hae ye to think? Is't not as clear as a pike-staff, that trade and traffic are to be the ruin o' this country. In a few years, it's my opinion, they'll no be sic a thing as a gentleman. There's that poor mean-spirited body Monkgreen, wha was aye ettling to improve and improve his lands like a common farmer, and wha cut down the fine auld trees o' his grandfather's planting, and set up his sons as Glasgow merchants—What hae

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"I am surprised, my dear father, that you entertain such prejudices against those who rise in the world by their talents and merits. The founders of all families must have sprung originally from the people," said Mary, with a persuasive accent.

"True, Mary, my dear—that's very true," replied the laird; "but there's some difference between a family come of the sword, and ane o' the shuttle."

"Ay, brother; but Sir Andrew Wylie's no frae the loom, but the law," said Miss Mizy.

"That's ten times waur," cried the laird. "Every body kens that lawyer is just another name for cheater. Wasna I obligated to pay James Gottera seventeen pounds odd shillings for outlay, and the price of the cow that happened to die, by me accidentally poking my stick in her e'e when she was riving down the hedge? Was there ever such injustice heard o'?—and that came o' the law."

"I doubt, sir," said Mary, "that with these sentiments you and the baronet are not likely to become very intimate."

"Bauronet! bauronet! What gars the lassie aye cast up that bauronet to me? I dinna like to hear sic havers. Bauronet! Set him up and shuve him forward. Martha Docken's oye a bauronet!"

The conversation continued in this strain for some time, till Miss Mizy again reminded her brother that Sir Andrew had bought the Wylie estate. "They say," said she, "that he paid mair than thirty thousand pounds for't."

"Barrow't money! barrow't money!" exclaimed the laird. "What's to hinder folk frae buying estates with heritable bonds?"

"But the baronet" — Mary was proceeding to say, when her father interrupted her peevishly.

"Bauronet again! Wilt t'ou ne'er devald with that baronet-ing? Tak him to you and his bauronetey."

"I'm sure she may get far waur," replied Miss Mizy; "for he's a sensible man, and ye saw how he was deferred to by the lord and his leddy, and how Sir Archibald and Laddy Margaret made o' him."

"They hae their ain ends for that," retorted the laird.

"Ends! What ends?" cried Miss Mizy raising her voice.

"Ends here, or ends there," replied the laird doggedly, "it's time to eni this clishmaclaver. I want to hear ~~nae~~ mair o't, so dinna fash me." And with that he leant his head aside on his easy-chair, and seemingly fell asleep.

"I wonder," said Mary in a suppressed voice to her aunt, "what can make my father cherish such antipathy against Sir Andrew."

"It's no so muckle against him, as it's against the new-made gentry in general," said Miss Mizy.

"I'm no sleeping," said the laird, by way of admonishing them to refrain from the subject; and raising himself, he added, "I have been thinking on what we were discoursing about; and, sister, if Sir Andrew mak's a proposal to you, I'll no object to the match."

"Me!" exclaimed the elderly maiden. "Proposals to me!"

Mary laughed, and said, "How do you imagine, sir, that he has any such intention?"

"I saw wi' the tail o' my e'e that he was unco couthy with her mair than ance."

"Brother," replied Miss Mizy, "how can sic an absurdity enter your head?"

"Then what the deevil mak's you sae hyte about the fallow?" cried the laird. "But we'll see what's to happen. A' I can say is, I'll no object; for really, sister, ye hae nae time to spare." And, chuckling with delight at this brilliant sally, the laird rose, and lifting one of the candles, left the ladies for some time to discuss the subject by themselves.

CHAPTER XCV.

A SERVING LASS.

THE maid-servant who looked into the dining-room to tell Miss Cunningham of Lord and Lady Sandysford, was no ordinary character in her walk of life. Except once, to see the draught race on the Saturday of Marymas Fair at Irvine, she had never been out of the jurisdiction of the parish of Stoneyholm. In her appearance she was, even for her condition, uncommonly rustic; but random gleams of shrewdness and intelligence occasionally showed that she was not altogether the simpleton which her acquaintance in general thought. Her father was the parish beadle, or betheral, as that dignitary is called in Scotland, and, in addition to the wonted duties of his office, followed as a profession the calling of a weaver.

While she was a little girl running about the doors, Mr Tannyhill happened to be pleased with some whimsical trait in her playfulness, and took her under his own particular care, teaching her not only all the little that he commonly taught the other children; but finding her apt, and possessed of a taste for reading, he instructed her in the Latin language, and in time produced what he considered a most accomplished classical scholar. Bell Lampit, however, acquired no blue-stockings: she grew up to womanhood unconscious of any superior attainments, and was not otherwise distinguished from her companions, than by being perhaps a little less attentive to dress.

About the age of eighteen, she was hired into the Craighlands' family as an under-housemaid; and she might, at the period of which we are now speaking, be described as a queer-looking girl, with ragged locks, long red legs, a short jupe, and a merry eye. In the capacity, however, of a servant, the advantages of the education which the master had conferred, were soon manifested in various ways. Instead of singing melodious ditties, like her companions, to cheer the tasks of household drudgery, Bell commonly repeated aloud to herself the choicest passages of the English and classic poets; and it was not uncommon to

hear her, in bottling small beer, joyously recite, as she turned the cock, some social verse from Anacreon or Horace. One forenoon, a short time before Sir Andrew's return, when we happened to call at The Place, and were induced by the laird to stay dinner, we heard her, as she picked a fowl that was put to death on our account, declaim, with good emphasis, the whole of Dryden's Ode. Suiting the action to the word, she tore the feathers with appropriate unison to the varied enthusiasm of the poetry; nor would it be easy to imagine a finer burst of fervour, than the energy with which she flourished the hen by the legs round her head, as she exclaimed,

"And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder!"

But for all this, her merits as a housemaid were not of a high order; on the contrary, when we expressed our admiration of her accomplishments to Miss Mizy, that thrifty lady declared she was "a glaikit and neglectfu' tawpy, that couldna be trusted to soop the house, if a book or a ballad was left in her way."

Among other endowments, Bell enjoyed from nature an irresistible propensity to communicate to others some account of whatever she heard or saw. Lord and Lady Sandyford's visit, with the consideration in which it was understood they treated Sir Andrew, sent her cackling to the village, as soon as she obtained Miss Mizy's permission to go out, on the wonted pretext of every maid-servant's Sunday evening excursions, both in town and country, that is, to see her parents. And about the time that our hero and his grandmother were conversing with cripple Janet, she was expatiating with all the elocution of her nature, to a numerous assemblage of the villagers, on the events which had that day taken place at the Craiglands.

The result of her narrative did credit to the sagacity of her auditors, for they came to the unanimous conclusion, that Sir Andrew and Miss Mary would be speedily married, as they were, no doubt, betrothed to each other from the time that the young lady, with her aunt, had visited London. This idea was, in part, suggested by some observations which the erudite Bell had made, while assisting Robin Taigle to serve the table during dinner. But although it was in so far her own suggestion, it yet, never-

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theless, operated upon her with the force of a new impetus, and she could no more refrain from indulging herself in the delight of being the first to tell the news to her fellow-servants, than in the other case she could withstand her propensity to inform her parents and the neighbours, of every circumstance that she had seen or guessed respecting the visit of the English lord and his lady.

It happened, however, that Bell, in her eagerness to be delivered of the tidings with which her fancy was so big, rushing brimful into the servants' hall, did not observe that Miss Mizy was there inspecting a closet with a candle.

"O, what will I tell you a'!" was her exclamation. "Sir Andrew's come down from London to be married to our Miss Mary."

"What's t'ou saying, Bell," cried Miss Mizy, starting from the closet, and blowing out the candle as she set it down on the table.

"Deed, mistress, it's a' the clatter of the town. What a' say maun be true," was the reply.

With whatever sensations Miss Mizy received this information, she said nothing to the servants, but went immediately to the dining-room, where the laird was sitting asleep in his easy-chair, while Miss Mary was reading aloud to him one of Blair's sermons.

"Mary, what do ye think that haverel jillet, Bell Lampit, has heard in the clachan?" said Miss Mizy in a sort of exulting whisper.

Mary shut the book, and the laird turned his head to the other side of the easy-chair, as if in his slumber he sought the sound which had lulled him asleep.

"How should I know?" replied the young lady, somewhat surprised at the spirits into which the news seemed to have raised her aunt.

"They say ye're to be married to Sir Andrew!" exclaimed Miss Mizy, lifting her hands in token of the admiration with which she enjoyed the intelligence, and the triumph which it gave her over her niece, who had so often slighted her prognostications with respect to his grandeur and greatness

Mary laughed, and said, "I should not wonder if the story has taken its rise from daft Jamie, who, in the fulness of his heart, for the sixpence he got from Sir Andrew, advised me to marry him."

But her mirth was not so deep as her heart, and she experienced the influence of a strange presentiment thrill through all its pulses, in connexion with a sudden rush into her fancy, of every incident associated in her recollection with the image of our hero.

"I wonder what your father will say till't," cried Miss Mizy; and she moved round towards the easy-chair, for the purpose of rousing the laird.

But Mary interposed, saying, "I am surprised that you should be so taken up with this nonsense—I beg you won't disturb my father—consider his prejudices. It will only vex him to suppose such a thing possible."

"Possible!" exclaimed Miss Mizy; "my lass, ye may be thankfu' if ye'll get the offer—to be the lady of that ilk—Na, na, Mary, it's not to be expectit that a baronet, hand and glove wi' lords and duchesses yonder, will come frae London to speer your price."

"I am astonished to hear you speak so lightly of such a thing," replied Miss Cunningham; "for I am persuaded that if the creature Wheelie were to offer, there is not one in the world would be more disposed to send him off with a short answer than yourself."

"It's my fear he'll no try," was the tartish answer of the old lady; "so ye needna, Mary Cunningham, gie yoursel' sic airs—and ca' the grapes sour that ye canna reach—like the tod in Esop's fable—So I will tell your father, for it's but right and proper to prepare him for the news."

Mary made no answer, but rising abruptly, suddenly quitted the room, while Miss Mizy, going round to the easy-chair, shook the laird awake.

CHAPTER XCVI.

A DEBATE.

"SISTER," said the laird, rubbing his eyes as Miss Mizy disturbed his slumber, "what for will ye no let a body sleep? Ye ne'er devald, wi' ae thing or another, frae keeping me in het water."

"I wonder how ye can think o' dozing at that gait; it's enough to turn your brains to oil," replied his sister. "But there's great news in the town."

"Ay, and what are they? Is Boney put out o' the way at last?" said Craiglands, rousing himself into as much life as possible.

"It's something far more extraordinar," replied Miss Mizy, "and what I'm no thinking ye'll be so well pleased to hear."

"How do ye ken whether I'll be weel or ill pleased?" retorted the laird peevishly. "It's an unco thing that ye maun aye be argol-bargoling wi' me in that gait. I can get nae rest for you by night or by day."

"I ken very weel," in a tone quite as sharp, was Miss Mizy's answer; "and every body kens that, that kens you."

"Every body kens, Miss Mizy, that thou's a cankerly creature, and that had thou no been sae, I might hae been quit o' thee lang syne; but nae fool cast up that would be fashed wi' thee."

"Weel, weel, may be ye'll no be muckle langer plagued wi' me; for if the news are true that I have heard, I'll soon hae a better stading for mysel'."

"Thae maun be great news, indeed," said the laird, with an accent approaching to the tone of wonder. "And what are they? It maun be an ill wind to somebody that will blaw sic good to the Craiglands."

"An ye will hae't, ye shall hae't," retorted the justly-offended gentlewoman. "They say Sir Andrew and your dochter's to be married."

"Wha dares to say the like o' that?" cried the laird.

"There noo! ye see what I foretold's come to pass," exclaimed Miss Mizy. "Didna I tell you that the tidings boded nae daffin' to you?"

"And how do you know whether they bode daffin' or dule?" replied Craiglands, a little taken aback. "A' that I can say is, that I dinna believe ae word o't."

"It's very little to the purpose whether ye believe it or no; but if the marriage is to be, what will ye say till't?" rejoined Miss Mizy.

"I'm sure it would be a kittle question for me to answer," retorted the laird, "gin there was ony sic benison in the bargain as a clear house o' thee. But it's no a thing of ony sort o' probability at a', and Mary Cunningham would ne'er tryst hersel' without my connivance."

"As for that," cried Miss Mizy, triumphing in the commotion which the news had evidently raised in her brother's mind, "she's her father's ain bairn, a chip o' the auld block; and it's my opinion, that were Sir Andrew really to make an offer, she would refuse him, out of the contrarie spirit that she inherits frae—I'll no say wha."

"Mizy, thou hadst ne'er a gude word o' ony body," replied the laird; "and it says but little for thee to misliken thy ain niece, who is baith a gude-tempered and an obedient lassie, twa things that ne'er could be said o' that side o' the house that ye're come o'."

"Weel, hand your ain part gude, brother; but unless I'm far wrang," was the lady's emphatic reply, "ye'll maybe find, if the matter comes to a trial, wha's in the right."

The laird, instead of responding, stretched out his hand, and taking his staff, which stood at his side, knocked sharply on the floor.

"What do you want?" inquired his sister.

But, instead of answering her question, he repeated the knocking, and Robin Taigle appeared to his summons.

"Gar ane o' the lasses," said his master, "tell my dochter to step this way."

"What do you want wi' her?" exclaimed Miss Mizy.

"I'm her father, and it's none of your business, for ye're but her aunty—mind that."

Robin having retired, in the course of about a minute after, the shrill tongue of Bell Lampit was heard crying at the foot of the stair, "Hey, Miss Mary, come down and pacify the laird, for he's wud wi' Miss Mizy."

"The de'il do me gude o' that tawpy!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "I wonder how I hae been able to thole her sae long; she would have skeighed in the same fool fashion, an the house had been fu' o' strangers. Bell Lampit, ye limmer, wha taught you to speak in that disrespectfu' way o' me?"

Bell, on hearing herself named, opened the dining-room door, and looking in from behind it, said, "What's your wull, maister?"

"That's my wull," cried the laird, and he flung the staff at her head. "There ne'er surely was a poor man driven so demented as I am by a wheen idiot women."

Miss Cunningham, on hearing herself summoned, immediately came down stairs, and the moment she entered the room, her father said, in a soothing and coaxing manner, "Mary, my love, this misleart aunty of yours has been garring me trow that ye're a crossgrained ettercap like hersel', and in no ae thing will do my bidding, an I were ne'er so urgent!"

"I trust and hope that it is not your disposition, sir," replied Mary, "to ask of me any thing so unreasonable as that I should refuse."

"That's a leddy!" exclaimed the laird. "Noo, Mizy, what do you say to that? Is there ony contrarie spirit there?"

"But ye havena tried her?" exclaimed the aunt, anticipating an entire confirmation of her opinion. "See if she'll consent to marry Sir Andrew Wylie; try her wi' that, brother?"

"I think," said Mary, a little fervently, "it will be time enough when Sir Andrew requests him."

"Vera right, Mary—a sensible observe," was the laird's answer. "We'll gut nae fish till we get them; and I hope your aunty will tak warning after this night, and no molest me wi' her sedition. But noo that we hae come to a right understanding, I would like to ken how the clash has risen?"

Miss Cunningham herself ha' a little curiosity on the subject

as well as her father ; for, although she considered daft Jamie as the original author, she had a feminine inclination to know the particulars of all that was reported. Accordingly, after some brief consultation, it was resolved that Bell Lampit should be called in and examined. The laird's stick was still lying on the floor, when Bell, on being summoned, entered, and she lifted it up, and held it out to him by the end, with a gawky look of trepidation.

"What's this, Bell," said her master, setting the stick in its wonted place, "that ye hae brought from the clachan the night?"

"I brought naething, sir," replied Bell, with the most perfect and sincere simplicity.

"Ca' ye't naething to be raising a rippet in the house about Sir Andrew Wylie and Miss Cunningham?" exclaimed Miss Mizy. "The laird wants to ken what is't that ye hae heard."

"O, just a wheen havers, Miss Mizy!—just a wheen havers!" replied Bell—"causey talk—Vox populi!"

"Vox deevils!" cried the laird. "But what do they say?"

"That Sir Andrew would hae been married to Miss Mary lang ago; but ye wouldna part wi' her tocher till he could count pound and pound wi' you twice o'er," replied Bell.

"It's a confounded lee!" exclaimed the laird indignantly, while both Miss Mizy and Mary laughed.

"I said it was a lee," replied Bell; "and some thought it wasna come to pass that ye would ever consent to let Miss Mary tak him, though he had the main's more."

"Wha thought sae? and what business had they to be making or meddling in the matter?" cried the laird.

"Deed, sir," said Bell, "I said that I didna think Miss Mary would ever tak sic a tee-totum as Wheelie."

"And wha the deevil speer't your counsel anent it!" exclaimed the laird. "Ye bardy loon, gae but the house and mind your wark. Ye thought and they thought—but if it wasna mair for ae thing than another, I hae a thought that would gar baith you and them claw whar it's no yeuky."

"Bell, leave the room," said Mary; and she added to her father, "You have judged very properly, sir. It is not right

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to allow servants to speak so familiarly. Her remark on Sir Andrew's appearance was highly unbecoming."

"She's a half-witted creature," replied the laird, restored to his wonted composure. "Sir Andrew, in my opinion, is a very decent man of his stature."

"He's a very sensible man, which is mair to the purpose," rejoined Miss Mizy.

"What ken ye about sense, Mizy? Hegh, woman, but ye hae made a poor show o' yours this night," said the laird exultingly; and he continued, "Come, Mary, my dawty, lend me your arm, and help me up the stair to my room. Gude-night, Mizy; and the next time ye prognosticate, I redd you to look better at the almanac."

In saying these words, he broke out into one of his loudest and longest guffaws, at the conclusion of which, leaning on his daughter's arm, he left the room.

CHAPTER XCVII.

A DREAM.

When our hero retired for the night to the small chamber which had been constructed at the back of his grandmother's cottage, he sat down and ruminated on the events of the day. A large predominance of pleasure had undoubtedly been enjoyed, but the comment of Cripple Janet, on the cause of Mary Cunningham's kindness to her, threw long and wavering shadows of doubt and apprehension over the hopes which the incidents in other respects had unfolded; and it seemed to him, that although he had reached the table-land of fortune, there was a deep and dark ravine between him and the desired object of his perseverance and pursuit. He had been hitherto engaged with affairs wherein his own passions had no concern, and no obstacle had impeded his career, or taught him to apprehend that he might not reach the goal of his ambition. While he therefore acknow-

ledged, that in all external circumstances he had been enabled to surpass even his wishes, he could not disguise from himself, that there are aims in life of more difficult attainment than even riches and honours. He felt that there was an immeasurable difference between the disinterested dictates of gratitude, and the desires and sentiments which spring from passion. In the affair of Lord and Lady Sandysford, he was free and decisive; but in seeking the consummation of his own happiness, doubts and diffidence paralyzed his resolution. It seemed to him, that in his own case, comparatively, nothing depended on himself, and every thing on the acquiescence of another's will and affections.

"If," said he to himself, as he sat on the bedside, "Mary Cunningham has been a' this time thinking only on Charlie Pierston, I wish I had kent it before he went to Indy, for I think it would have been a pleasure to have helped them to happiness; and I had no need to be gripping and gathering in the way I have done, had it no been to make myself a stair to mount to an equality with her. 'To make the crown a pound young Jamie gaed to sea.'—But, after all, Robin Gray got Jenny. Weel, I canna help it. But ae thing I can do—I can prove that I wasna unworthy of her love. I'll try the morn's morning to discover how her mind lies, and if she prefers Charlie, I'll write to him to come hame, and I'll gie him the estate o' Wylie to mak a kirk and a mill o't wi' her. For I'll no fash mysel' ony mair wi' this world's pelf and the blathrie o't."

With this determination he began to undress, but in the course of a few seconds he forgot himself, and again sat down, saying—

"Surely Mary Cunningham's no the only ane that I might think of—I wonder how it is that I have fancied her so long. She's neither so bonny nor so blithesome as fifty others I hae seen; I have been just the fool of that calf love, bred o' the fifty psalms and the headstane. I wouldna be surprised to hear she made me the laughing-stock o' a' her acquaintance, for she was just a deevil for making diversion o' me among them lang syne.—No: it canna be that she has any notion o' Charlie—he, I'm sure, had nane o' her—that's a certain thing; for he was a wild rampol lad, and would ne'er hae run sic ram races had he felt

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a right true and faithful affection as I did. But what signifies that?—it’s a’ ane to me if her fancy runs on him, for I’ll ne’er take a portion of a divided heart.—But the sooner I get at the bottom of this the better. And with that he undressed, and throwing himself carelessly into bed, all the transactions of his past life floated through his mind, in connexion with the image of Mary Cunningham; and suddenly the form of Pierston was seen standing near him. He looked at him, and he appeared pale and feeble, and pointing with his hand to a picture, on which appeared the distant view of an oriental city. In the foreground of the landscape was a cemetery, with several tombs, and on one of them he saw the name of Pierston inscribed. In the surprise of the moment, he turned round to ask his friend what it meant. But the morning sun shone brightly in his eyes, and the vision of the picture and of his friend had vanished with his waking.

There was something in the circumstances of this dream which made him averse to sleep again; and having dressed himself, he walked out.

In passing from the village to the high-road, he saw the master before him, walking quickly, with the front of his cocked hat turned backwards, and the back slackened down for a shade to his eyes. Mending his pace, he soon came up to him.

The dominie, on being addressed by the baronet, shortened his steps, and they fell into conversation as they walked together respecting cripple Janet; the result of which was, that Sir Andrew was to settle on her a stipend sufficient to keep her comfortable as a boarder with some one of the cottiers. “By which,” said the master, “ye’ll bespeak twa good words aboon, by one good action here: for the stipend will be a help to some other, as well as a consolation to Janet.”

By the time they had discussed this arrangement, they arrived at the end of the lane which led from the hamlet to the high-road. It was not our hero’s intention to go farther, and he halted; while the master continued to improve his pace.

“Where away so fast?” said the baronet.

“O!” replied the master, “I have had great news. A young lad that I kent at the college, is come hame from some foreign

part; and last night when I left you, I found a letter from him, sent frae Irvine, bidding me to come and see him at the Cross-keys Inns there this morning. We were great companions when laddies, but I thought he was dead and gane mony a year and day ago; he was a clever chappie, and used to say, if ever he made a fortune he would get me a kirk."

"A kirk!" said the baronet—"I didna know that ye were a preacher."

"Watty Ettle used to say I was a very gude ane; but I had nae freen's to help me forward, so what was the use of my preaching?" replied the innocent dominie.

"But are you qualified to accept a living?" exclaimed Sir Andrew, feeling something between pain and pleasure—never before having heard or imagined that Mr Tannyhill possessed any dignity beyond those which he held in the parish of Stoneyholm.

"Ay," replied the master, "I was licensed; but since I preached my first sermon in the Barony Kirk o' Glasgow, I have never had courage to mount another poopit; for, oh I was terribly frightened that day! when I gave out the first psalm, ye might have heard my heart beating at the far end o' the kirk."

"I'm glad to hear this," said the baronet to himself audibly.

"What for should it make you glad? for it was the breaking of my bread, and made me fain to seek the lowly bield of a parish school, where, for more than five-and-twenty years, I have been delving sand and washing Ethiopians," replied the mild and modest licentiate in the reproving accent of expostulation.

"My worthy friend," said our hero, "ye cannot think I would hurt your feelings; I was only glad to hear that you are qualified to accept a parish. I think it's no beyond my power to get you one. But go to your old friend, and when you return I'll expect to see you."

The gentle and ingenuous dominie could scarcely comprehend the import of these words; so much did the baronet still appear the simple boy he had known as Wheelie. But after they had separated, he began to reflect on all that had passed;

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and by the time he reached the minister's carse of Irvine, he had formed a tolerably correct idea in what manner it might be in the power of a baronet and a member of parliament to procure him a parish.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PRIDE.

"I'm thinking, sister," said Craiglands, when he came down stairs to breakfast, "that it's no just what is proper in our family to gang to Auchinward on a visitation, in a barrow't coach. We're bound, out o' a respect to oursel's, to let those Englishers see that we hae coaches of our ain as gude as theirs; so ye'll tell Robin Taigle to put his horses in order for the road, and to snod himsel' for a decency on the present occasion."

Miss Mizy agreed that it would assuredly be more becoming the dignity of the family to go in their own carriage; for, as she very sapiently observed, "although the lord and the lady promised to send the coach for us, there was no word said about sending us back."

Miss Mizy perhaps in this judged of them by herself. Robin Taigle, however, was ordered to get the equipage ready in due time; so that, when Mary entered the room, she was informed of the change made in the arrangement, and that Sir Andrew would have the lord's carriage to himself.

"I'm glad of it," said Mary; "for really after the nonsense we heard last night, I do think we could not go with propriety to Auchinward together. There is no need to countenance the foolish notions which one cannot prevent foolish people from taking into their heads."

Whether any change had taken place during the night in the laird's reflection, or whether, in the debate of the preceding evening, he had been only actuated by his habitual apprehen-

sion of Miss Mizy interfering too particularly with those concerns which he considered entirely his own, but which were not the less under her supreme authority, by his so doing, it is certain, that in the morning all his family prejudices were as giants refreshed, and that during breakfast he spoke in the most contemptuous manner on the ludicrous idea of Martha Docken's oye being evened to his daughter. Nay, he actually went so far as to joke with Mary on the subject, till he brought the crimson blood into the bloom of her cheeks and the alabaster of her neck and bosom.

"It is," said she, "the most extraordinary thing I ever knew, that, without the slightest reason, such an idea should have arisen. Wheelie, for truly I can call him by no other name or title, is very well to laugh with and laugh at. But——" and she paused.

"But what?" cried Miss Mizy, who never gave up her opinion to living mortal; and she added, "I'm sure he is your equal in consequence only day. 'Thir's no the days of antiquity—a baronet's a man of some degree—and Mary, ye canna disown that he was farther ben among the great than any other body we met wi' in London. My solid judgment is, and I have had a consideration o' the subject, that Wheelie, whom, by the King's proclamation, we are behadden to call Sir Andrew, is a dungeon o' wit, the like of whilk is no to be met wi' out o' the presence o' the fifteen lords in Edinburgh, and I jalouse there are but few like him even there."

"He may be a great man," replied Mary laughingly, "but he is certainly a wee bodie."

The laird, who was in the act of rapping an egg with a tea-spoon, set both down, and throwing himself back in his chair, laughed immoderately for about a minute, at the end of which he resumed the tea-spoon and the egg as gravely as if he had never been laughing at all.

"Howsever," said the judicious Miss Mizy, "since we're no to go in Lord Sandfyord's coach wi' Sir Andrew, I think we should let him know that we go thegither by oursel's in our own carriage."

"Certainly," replied Mary, "it would be exceedingly rude to

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do otherwise;" and the laird, declaring his abhorrence of all rudeness, especially if there was any chance of it coming to the ears of the Englishers, acquiesced. Bell Lampit was accordingly called in to be instructed in the requisite particulars of a mission to our hero.

"Ye'll gang," said Miss Mizy, "to Martha Docken's, and gie our compliments to Sir Andrew."

"Ye'll do no sic things, Bell!" exclaimed the laird; "ye'll take no compliments from me—That would be to gie the fallow encouragement."

"Bell," interposed Miss Cunningham, "go to Sir Andrew and say, that as my father finds himself well enough to dine at Auchinward to-day, we shall go with him in our own carriage; so that it will be unnecessary for him to call here for us with Lord Sanddyford's."

"It's vera extraordinary," cried Miss Mizy, "that neither the one nor the other of you will allow me to gie the lassie a right instruction.—Bell, ye'll gang to Sir Andrew, and say that it's no convenient for us to depend upon any other carriage than our own for the retour at night, so we intend just to gang by oursel's."

"I'm sure," exclaimed the laird, "I see nae need for a' this *pro forma*. I'm no for summering and wintering about the matter."

Bell, being thus instructed, lost no time in proceeding to the village.

In the course of the walk, she ruminated as most maiden ministers do who are entrusted with messages—perhaps all messengers, male and maiden, do the same; and the result of her cogitations was, that the family had resolved to reject Sir Andrew's matrimonial proposals.

Under this impression, on reaching the cottage-door of old Martha, she pulled the latch, and just looking in, as the baronet was sitting at breakfast with his grandmother, said, "Sir Andrew, ye maun find the road to Auchinward by yoursel', for there's nae room for you in our chaise."

"What did ye say, lassie?" replied our hero, partly guessing, but not exactly understanding, the purport of the message.

"Dinna heed the donsie creature," said Martha. "It's the

betheral's daft dochter—poor thing, she was a harmless bairn—a wee silly; but the maister taught her Latin, and made her an idiot."

Bell by this time had entered the cottage, and, taking a seat uninvited, began to swing herself backwards and forwards, repeating Jupiter's speech to the gods from Pope's Homer.

"Haud thy tongue, Bell, wi' sic havers, and tell us what thou was saying," said Martha.

"I was saying naething, but only that our folk are a' gaun to Auchinward on their high horses."

"Ay! and what's gart them mount them?" enquired Sir Andrew.

"It's far frae my aught to say," replied Bell; "but I hae a notion their no overly pleased about something—ye maybe ken what."

"Me!" exclaimed the baronet, and he suddenly checked himself; while Bell, unrequested, began to give his grandmother her own version of what had occurred during the conversation which took place when she received her instructions. But our hero soon cut her short, saying, "Weel, weel, gae away hame, and gie my compliments to the laird, and say that I am glad to hear he is so well this morning, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing him at Auchinward. And, Bell, as ye hae had some trouble in the business, there's twa shillings to buy a riband."

"Na, na," cried Bell, starting up, and rushing towards the door, "that would be bribery, rank bribery," and she fled from the cottage as fast as her heels could carry her about twenty paces, when, her feminine inclinations overcoming her classical integrity and principles, she returned, and, with a gawky laugh, held out her hand, and received the money.

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CHAPTER XCIX.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Soon after the retreat of Bell Lampit, the master having returned from his visit to his old college companion, came into the cottage. He appeared deeply dejected, and brought in his hand a letter sealed with black, which he laid on the table without speaking, and, sitting down, heaved a profound sigh.

Sir Andrew was in a brown study at the time, reflecting on the communication he had received from the Craighlands, and did not observe the emotion of Mr Tannyhill. But his grandmother said, "What's come ower you the day, sir? and whar did ye get that letter?"

The affectionate dominie faltered as he replied—"I hae heard black news. I dinna ken when I met wi' sic a sore stroke. The letter's for Sir Andrew, and I doubt, though he'll hear o' great things in't, it'll gie him but sma' pleasure."

The baronet's attention was roused by this, and he lifted the letter; but, before breaking the seal, he turned round to the master, and enquired now it happened to come into his hands.

"Watty Ettle brought it himsel', and he has come a' the way from London wi' the testament, to deliver it into your own hands," said Mr Tannyhill.

"Testament!" cried our hero, with surprise and agitation; and a chill and fearful sentiment passed through his mind, mingled with the remembrance of his dream and of Pierston.

"Poor Charlie's dead!" said the master, with an accent of extreme sorrow.

Sir Andrew laid down the letter unopened, and involuntarily pushing back his chair, exclaimed, "Dead!"

"Ay, he's gone, he died on the wide waters, and his body lies buried in the bottom o' the deep sea. He was seized with some severe ailment—the doctors ordered him to try a change of climate, and he was coming home; but death had laid his bony hand upon him for ever, and wouldna slacken the grim grip—so blithe Charlie is no more. The warm heart is kneaded into

cold clay, and the light spirit has departed on the wings of the morning, to that place where there is no separation, nor ither division but the boundaries of light and love."

Martha observing the impression which the news had produced on our hero, said, "I dinna wonder, Andrew, that ye're sorry, for ye had many a happy day wi' ane anither, before your young hearts had met wi' ony thing in the world to make you ken that a' thing in't is hard and rough, and ill to thole."

"Yes," observed the master, taking up the reflection, "we never meet wi' freen's like the freen's o' our youth, when we hae lost them. I can sympathize wi' Wheelie," said the kind-hearted schoolmaster, forgetting in the moment all the events of the interval which had passed since he had used the epithet—"for, in my green and glad days, there was a brisk wee laddie that I used to play wi' in the summer sunshine, and slide wi' on the winter's ice. The coal was cauld on the hearth of baith our parents, and we were obligated in time to seek our bread in the world. He gaed into Glasgow for his, and was 'prenticed to a wareroom; but still, about ance a year we met, and at ilka meeting the covenant o' our young friendship was renewed in our hearts. Belyve, when I had ta'en a turn for divinity, and had gathered, wi' the help o' friends, twa-three pounds to tak me to the College, we lived thegither; our means were sma', and when they were like to wear out I was often very sad; but his spirit was made of light and joy, and he so seasoned our scrimpit meals wi' the happiness of his nature, that I still look back to the penury of the winter we passed thegither, as to the holly-bush, wi' its bonny red berries, standing green and bright amidst the snaw. He was a clever and a through-gaun lad, and grew to be a clerk wi' a great merchant, who sent him to a foreign place wi' a rich cargo—in the whilk he was to hae a profit. But when he got there, things werena as he had hoped, and his letters to me were ane after another more and more full of doubts and fears, and at last the merchant got ane that told he was dead. I kenna how it was, that at the time I didna experience such a sorrow as I should have felt, and I was vexed when I thought he was dead, and that I should have so little naturalty—strangely, at times, fancifying as if he could come

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back; but in time other cares and concerns grew upon me, and his image, like an epitaph that's overgrown by moss, was in a manner obliterated till many years after, when meeting by chance wi' a gentleman that knew him in that foreign land, we fell into discourse about him, and the stranger told me that he died of a broken heart—all the pride and hopes of his young expectations being blighted by the ill luck of the venture. It's no to be told what I then suffered; I pined, and was solitary, and I couldna eat. I dare say I would soon hae perished with the thought of the blithe Jamie Haddow dying o' despondency, but for the freendliness of Watty Ettle, that's brought home from India poor Charlie Pierston's will and testament, leaving you his total heir. That letter's frae him, and he bade me tell you that the legacy is better than twenty thousand pounds."

It was even so. Pierston, according to the advice of his physicians, had been induced to try the benefits of a voyage from Bengal to the Cape; and before embarking, made a will, by which he bequeathed his whole property to his friend. At the same time, and in the same deed, he recommended to his care a natural child, whom he had named Roderick Random Pierston; adding, "In doing this, I know that I better serve my boy, than by leaving him ten times more than all I possess."

We shall not attempt to describe the feelings with which our hero was affected; but as soon as Mr Tannyhill left him to join his little flock in the school, he immediately wrote instructions to Mr Vellum to prepare a trust-deed, by which he assigned the whole of Pierston's property to the boy, the one-half of the amount it might realize to be paid when he reached the age of twenty-one; a fourth on his attaining that of thirty; and the remainder when he reached thirty-five. "For," said the baronet, in the letter to his partner, "if the chap takes after the nature of the father of him, he'll need the bridle."

In the performance of this generous duty, he enjoyed some relief from the effects of the shock he had suffered; and after dispatching a boy with the letter to the post-office in Kilwinning, he strolled into the fields with mingled feelings of regret and solicitude respecting the effect which the tidings of Pierston's death would have on Mary Cunningham. Numberless objects,

as he sauntered along, reminded him of his deceased friend, and the sunny hours of their childhood. Heedless of his course, and lost in reverie, he walked as it were involuntarily towards a turn of the road where a large old tree was growing, against which, so entirely was his attention inwardly occupied, he suddenly stumbled; and being roused by the accident, he saw that it was the last of three elms, under the shadow of which he had often played, both with Willie Cunningham and Pierston. He looked at it for a moment; and the rush of recollections and of feelings which the sight called forth, suffused his heart and his eyes at the moment with tenderness and sorrow.

CHAPTER C.

THE GRIEF OF DISTANT RELATIONS.

DURING the time that Sir Andrew was on the road from London with his noble friends, as they travelled leisurely, the news of Pierston's death, and the manner in which his fortune was bequeathed, had been communicated to his relations in Scotland. His mother being dead several years before, one of his aunts, Miss Peggy Picken, a maiden lady who resided in the Stockwell of Glasgow, was his nearest kin; and although on the maternal side, she was, notwithstanding, firmly persuaded that if there was any justice in law she should have been his rightful heir. Miss Peggy was not in very affluent circumstances, and twenty thousand pounds would have been to her an agreeable acquisition; indeed, for that matter, we should ourselves have no objection, not even in the payment of that most hard tax the legacy-duty, to receive a bequest to only half the amount at any time. Having been educated at the same seminary with the equally accomplished Miss Mizy, they had for more than forty years kept up an occasional correspondence. During the first fifteen of the period, their letters had been flavoured with many pleasing anticipations, and amiable strictures on certain gentle-

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men, who, one after another, were deluded away from the circles of their haunts, by cunning and artificial women, who cajoled them to become their husbands; so that the two interesting spinsters had been most unaccountably left to spend their days in single blessedness. Miss Peggy Picken had been in the practice of occasionally visiting her old friend at the Craiglands, but after Miss Mary returned from Edinburgh she was invited no more; the young lady having strangely fancied that Miss Peggy was making a despairing dead set on her father—a most extraordinary thing in a person come to so many years of discretion—and she alarmed her aunt for the consequences. Still, however, Miss Mizy now and then wrote to her when she required any article of dress from Glasgow, commissions which Miss Peggy was always exceedingly delighted to execute; and, on her part, she had sometimes occasion to thank Miss Mizy for little remunerative presents for agency in the shape of poultry, kits of butter, and Dunlop cheese.

At the juncture of which we are now speaking, Miss Peggy having occasion to write her old companion, mentioned the death of Pierston, and bitterly complained of the “false,” as she called it, “will and testament which the near-be-gaun creature Wylie the lawyer had wheedled him to make, to the manifest injury of his own kith and kin.” No explanatory comment was added to this observation; so that, when Miss Mizy read the letter to Mary and her father, which happened much about the time that our hero had strolled into the fields, the laird expressed himself as perfectly of Miss Peggy Picken’s opinion. “No man,” said he, “that wasna under the cantrips and delusions of the law, would have been guilty of making such an instrument. It’s my notion that Miss Peggy should try to get it proven that her nephew was *non compos*, and so break the will. But nae wonder the baronet, as we maun nickname the body, has grown rich. To get silly dying folk in the delirium of a fever to leave us a’ their conquest is an easy way to make a fortune.”

Miss Mizy partly agreed with her brother, that the circumstances of the case ought to be investigated. “For if it could be come at,” as she observed, “that there was a secret pact between Charlie Pierston and Sir Andrew before he went to

Indy, by the whilk he covenanted to make him his heir, it could neither stand wi' law nor justice that those who had a right to his property should be cut off without a shilling."

Mary said nothing; the subject had thrown her into a pensive mood; and although she remained in the room, she sat silent, while her aunt and the laird thus learnedly discussed the case, until, differing upon some legal point, they came, as usual, to high words, which were, as usual, ended by the laird turning the deaf side of his head towards his sister, and affecting to fall asleep.

In the mean time, as Sir Andrew was standing ruminating near the elm-tree, Lord Sandyford's coach, which, according to the arrangement, had been sent to bring the party to Auchinward, came up. The servants on seeing him stopped, and he walked towards it, and was immediately admitted. Absorbed in his reflections, he neglected to tell them that it was unnecessary to go to The Place; and their instructions being to bring the family as well as him, they drove forward to the Craiglands, and were at the door before he was aware of his inadvertency.

Miss Mizy had, on the rupture of her altercation, retired with Mary to dress for dinner; the laird in the morning had put himself in order for the visit—and she was sitting in full blow with him when the carriage arrived. As there was no help for the baronet but to explain how it happened that, notwithstanding the message to the contrary, he had come in Lord Sandyford's coach, he alighted, and was shown into the parlour. Neither Craiglands nor his sister said any thing when they saw the carriage stop; but the former concluded in his own mind that Sir Andrew's pretensions had been reinforced by his legacy, and that he had come expressly to make proposals for Mary. Miss Mizy had not actually arrived at the same conclusion; but she thought it a very prideful incident that, after the message he had received, he should have come, and come too in the ostentation of Lord Sandyford's splendid equipage.

The tenor of these reflections was not calculated to produce any very urbane effect on their countenances; and our hero, on entering the room, was daunted by the solemnity of his reception. Mary at this time was still engaged with her toilet; and

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as she was not present, he inferred that her absence was to be attributed to the impression of Pierston's death. This idea had the effect of disconcerting him a little; nevertheless, he soon so far mastered the chagrin of the moment as to say, "I beg your pardon, laird, but in truth I was so much overtaken by the news of Mr Pierston's death, that I forgot your message, and the servants, not aware of the change in our arrangement for going to Auchinward, brought me here before I was sensible of my inattention."

"It's no surprising that ye should be in a consternation," replied Craiglands—"wha wouldna?" It's no every acquaintance that, without regard to their ain kith and kin, leaves a body sic a power o' siller as I understand ye hae gotten by that thoughtless lad's death."

"Ye have surely your ain luck, Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy. "I never heard the like o't; but it's a very extraordinary thing—very—that there wasna the value of a five-pound note for a ring to Miss Peggy Picken, his aunty—no that she stan's in need o't, for she has saved money; but blood is thicker than water."

"I daresay if my poor friend had thought any of his relations stood in a condition to require the bettering of a portion in his gathering, he would hae made provision to that effect," replied Sir Andrew, surprised that they should be already so fully acquainted with so much of the business.

"Wha wouldna be the better o' a share in sic a fortune?" exclaimed the laird. "But, sister, I wish ye would enquire what has become of that daidling bodie, Robin; he's aye ahint the foremost—and see if Mary's ready."

The baronet, who had felt himself excited almost to the heat of indignation, both by the matter and the manner of this short conversation, underwent a transition to a happier state of feeling, on hearing that Mary was expected to accompany her father and aunt; and when she soon after appeared with all her charms set off to the best advantage, the whole of his doubts and anxieties with respect to the state of her affection were dissolved; inso-much, that when Robin with the carriage at last came to the door, he could not refrain from expressing his regret that he was

deprived of the pleasure of her company in Lord Sandyford's coach.

The laird, assisted by him and one of the earl's servants, was raised into the carriage, while Bell Lampit and the other maids were seen peeping from out the doors of the rooms that opened into the hall. Daft Jamie, who had been all the morning loitering about The Place, stood aloof while the embarkation was going on; but when he saw Lord Sandyford's spruce footman leap up behind the coach after closing the door on Sir Andrew, he stepped forward, and as Robin began to lash his horses, crying, "Jee, brutes!" he took the similar station at the back of the laird's carriage, amidst the laughter of the servants; Bell Lampit coming forward from her concealment, extravagantly clapping her hands.

CHAPTER CI.

LADIES WITHOUT GENTLEMEN.

LORD SANDYFORD happened to be walking on the lawn in front of the house, with Sir Archibald, when the coach arrived; and, surprised to find it had brought only our hero, felt something like the sense of a rebuke when he saw him alight with a visible expression of thoughtfulness in his countenance, the effect of his reflections on the occurrences of the morning. For although Sir Andrew was convinced, by the appearance of Mary Cunningham, that he had nothing to apprehend from any attachment to Pierston, there was something in the behaviour both of the laird and Miss Mizy, that revolted his feelings, even while it was ludicrous.

The earl went immediately to enquire how it had happened that he came alone, which the baronet briefly explained, by stating, that the laird finding himself well enough to visit, had ordered out his own carriage before the coach arrived. He then mentioned to his lordship the news which he had received of

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Pierston's death, warmly eulogizing the gratitude by which his friend seemed to have been actuated.

"But," said he, "I can see that his legacy to me will not give satisfaction to his kindred. I have, however, done my duty in it." And he then told the earl what instructions he had sent to Vellum on the subject.

"Why, this is romance," said his lordship; "you should have kept it to make weight against Craiglands' prejudices—at least for some time."

While they were thus conversing, being in the mean time joined by Sir Archibald, the laird's equipage made its appearance, coming laboriously along the principal approach, Robin Taigle lashing with might and main his stubborn cattle, while daft Jamie, aping the consequentiality of a footman, was standing behind the carriage. The appearance of the whole pageantry was irresistibly ridiculous; insomuch, that both the earl and Sir Archibald found themselves obliged to retire into the house, leaving our hero, who had more command of his features, to assist the visitors to alight.

The moment that Robin had effected a halt, Jamie jumped down, and with a grand air opened the door, and pulled down the steps.

"What! is that thee, Jamie?" cried the laird; "How hast thou come here?"

"Ah, laird, they'll hae clear e'en and bent brows that'll see sic a flunkey as ye had the day, Craiglands!"

The laird and the ladies had, in the course of their journey, observed that every person they passed on the road, stopped and laughed, and they felt strangely awkward, not knowing the cause. But the moment Jamie told the old gentleman the part he had performed, the laird seized his stick, and gave him such a rap on the head, that he sent him yelling across the lawn.

"I'll flunkey thee!—to bring sic shame and disgrace on the like o' us," cried the laird. He then accepted the proffered assistance of Sir Andrew's arm, without noticing who it was; and by the help of it, and one of Sir Archibald's footmen, he alighted. The baronet, not aware that he had been only accidentally unnoticed, felt considerably disturbed, when the laird,

with the intention of being gallant, turned his back on him, and pushing his extended arm aside, thinking it was a servant's, handed the ladies out himself.

"This is a little too much," said he to himself; and he walked away, half resolved at the moment to give up every thought of a connexion by which his endurance was likely to be so severely tried. But his anger was never at any time of long duration, and before he had walked twenty paces the fume of the moment had evaporated, and, with a malicious playfulness, he resolved, since the laird was determined to treat him with so little ceremony, that he would retaliate. Accordingly, on going into the drawing-room where the whole party was assembled, after paying his respects to Lady Margaret, he addressed himself to the countess for a moment, who was sitting on a sofa with Mary Cunningham, and immediately entered into conversation with Lord Sandysford, without further at that time noticing either Craighlands or Miss Mizy.

In taking places at the dinner-table, he hesitated for a moment whether to concede the left hand of Lady Margaret to the laird; but before he had decided, her ladyship with a significant look said, "Sir Andrew, it is your place,"—and he stepped forward as if to take it; but turning round to the old gentleman, who was confounded at finding himself of a lower note than Martha Docken's oye, he said, "Age and antiquity, laird, ye ken, are honours that time can alone bestow. The king may make a belted knight, but he canna an ancient family—so, out of my respect for yours, I'll gie up my place."

The laird thus uncouthly preferred, sat down in a state of profound perplexity, while Sir Andrew placed himself between the countess and Mary.—But nothing surprised the old gentleman so much as the ease and confidence with which the baronet conducted himself, contrasted with the diffidence of his behaviour on the preceding day at the Craighlands.

Miss Mizy had by this time in a great measure recovered from the impression of Miss Peggy Picken's letter, and our hero soon ingratiated himself again into her good graces by some of those little table civilities, which, with ladies of a certain age, indeed of all ages—have the most agreeable influence;

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so that, when she retired after dinner to the drawing-room, she was again the eulogist of his wisdom and singular great good fortune.

"He's really a funny body that Sir Andrew," said Miss Mizy.—"I couldna hae thought it possible that he would ever have been able to behave himsel' so like a gentleman as he does."

"Indeed!" replied Lady Sandyford; "I assure you he is considered not more a man of merit than of delicacy. His peculiarities serve to give a zest to his humour."

"I am surprised," added Lady Margaret, "that he should have retained his Scottish accent so perfectly."

"It seems to me," rejoined the countess, "much stronger to-day than usual; but, indeed, he appears to have always cherished his national affections upon principle. I should not be surprised were we to discover that some rustic beauty had early interested him—Pray, Miss Cunningham, did you ever hear any thing of the kind suggested?" Without, however, waiting for a reply, the countess added, "We have often wondered that he never seemed disposed to form any matrimonial connexion in London, and could not account for it, but by supposing that his youthful affections had been engaged before he left Scotland."

"I should think, if that had been the case," said Lady Margaret, "he would long since have returned and married; for he is too sensible a man not to be aware, that to take a young woman of his own original condition out of her sphere, and to place her in that to which he has himself risen, is not likely to promote their mutual happiness."

"True," said the countess; "but from what I have observed, I should suspect that his attachment must have been towards some very different object. Pray, Miss Cunningham, what families of rank are in this neighbourhood?"

Mary, who was thrilling with she knew not what during this conversation, replied in a manner which betrayed what was passing in her mind, quite as much as the irrelevancy of the answer, "He was always a singular creature."

"Eh, dear!" exclaimed Mizy laughingly, on observing the confusion of her niece, "if Sir Andrew fell in love when he was Wheelie, I wouldna be surprised to hear it was wi' our Mary."

"How can you say so?" cried Mary, reddening extremely, and looking as if afraid to look.

"Have you any reason for that notion, Miss Mizy?" said Lady Margaret seriously; and before the aunt had time to reply, the countess added, —

"If the attachment was mutual, I should have some hope of enjoying a Scottish wedding soon. Nay, my dear Miss Cunningham," said her ladyship, addressing Mary, who was sitting beside her, while she at the same time took her by the hand, "Sir Andrew is an excellent creature; and supposing for a moment that there were any foundation for what we have been saying, how would you like to be called Lady Wylie?"

"Oh, she'll ne'er be that wi' Sir Andrew!" cried Miss Mizy triumphantly; "for she ne'er could endure to hear a good word said o' him."

"I should think," replied Mary, with some degree of firmness, "that I did him injustice if I had not fully acknowledged his merits, though I did not acquiesce in all that my aunt chose to say. But it could never enter my head to imagine that he would address me as a lover."

"How could you? he has been so long absent, you can have seen but little of each other," said the countess.

"True; and perhaps from that cause I am less sensible of his merits than those who have seen more of him," replied Mary.

"It's our Mary's fortune to refuse good offers," interposed Miss Mizy.

"Good offers!" said Mary indignantly—"yes, the offers that you and my father call good, but which no woman of any delicacy would have listened to for a moment."

"I perceive that we are carrying this subject too far," said the countess.

"Not at all," replied Mary with dignity; "why should I hesitate to say to your ladyship, that I have seen few men of whom I know so little, that I respect more than the little baronet?" and she added laughingly, "I never could think of him but as the droll creature Wheelie."

"Whom you assisted to learn fifty psalms behind a tombstone," replied the countess archly.

Mary was startled at the observation, and the look with which it was accompanied.

"I fear," said Lady Margaret jocularly, "that this is idle talk; for, from Craiglands' known and obvious prejudices, any offer from Sir Andrew would not be very acceptable."

"Acceptable here or acceptable there, ye ken, Leddy Margaret," was Miss Mizy's reply, "that the laird is a man that can abide no sort of trouble; and though it was the king himself that offered, he wouldna tak the pains to enquire about the fitness o' the match, but just be as dure as a door-nail, whichever way the thing gaed with his humour at the time."

"But your influence in any case," rejoined the countess, "might have the most beneficial effects."

"If any proper man were to make an offer, and Mary willing, the wedding would just hae to go on without consent, for the laird would come in til't or a' was done," said Miss Mizy.

"Then there would be no objection on your part, even to Sir Andrew?" said Lady Sandymford.

"As for me," replied Miss Mizy, "Sir Andrew has so kithed into the great man I always thought he would be, that I freely own the offer, an it were made, would to me be a great satisfaction."

"Well, I must say," exclaimed Mary laughing, "this is one way of making a match."

CHAPTER CII.

THE COMPACT.

WHILE the ladies, free from the restraint which the presence of the other sex ever imposes on the conversation of all woman-kind, were furthering the decrees of fate in the drawing-room, the gentlemen at their wine were no less ingeniously working out the same desired effects. Sir Archibald was a hospitable landlord, according to the Scottish acceptance of the term; and

as the laird had a hereditary respect for what he called the sociable bottle, his spirits began to mount, and he joked with our hero on his great good-luck, enquiring what for he hadna brought an English lady with him.

"They say, Sir Andrew, ye hae gotten a gude bargain o' the Wylie estate, and ye should mak some bonny lassie the better o't."

"I think so too," observed Sir Archibald, "and I'm sure he could not do better than make up to your daughter, Craiglands;" and before the laird had time to reply, he added, addressing himself to the earl, "I wish, my lord, we could persuade our friend to look that way. It is true, his rank is equal to my own, and that Lady Margaret is the sister of a duke; but the Craiglands family is highly respectable. I beg your pardon, Sir Andrew, I have perhaps taken too great a liberty in this jocular proposal."

"Oh!" said Lord Sandysford, "if you knew Sir Andrew as well as I do, you would not lay so much stress on the disparity of rank; no man can set less, nor at the same time a more just value upon it. Pray, Mr Cunningham, was your father in parliament?"

Craiglands' spirits, which had previously been rising, had undergone a strange depression by these observations; and the accent and look with which he answered "No," to the earl's question, almost upset the gravity of the whole conspirators.

"Perhaps, however," resumed the earl, "your grandfather was?"

The laird was still more mortified when obliged to repeat the negative.

"That's very extraordinary," said his lordship, as if drawing himself up into his nobility.

The laird found himself sinking, as it were, into the swinish multitude, especially when Sir Archibald added, "I do not recollect, Craiglands, at this moment, if any of your ancestors were baronets."

"Never mind, laird, whether they were or no," cried Sir Andrew, who perceived that the joke had been carried quite far enough—"I'll no object to Miss Mary on that account. But I

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doubt, were you and me 'greet about the job, Miss Mizzy wouldna be willing to grant her consent."

"And wha the deevil gied her ony consent in the matter!" exclaimed the old gentleman, glad to find himself not utterly insignificant.

Lord Sandysford by this little sally discovered the laird's jealousy of his sister's authority, and said, "It is certainly natural enough that an old maiden aunt should be averse to see her niece promoted to a higher rank than her own; but surely the baronet is not in earnest when he supposes that Mr Cunningham is subject to any control from his sister with respect to the disposal of his daughter—the thing is not for a moment to be imagined."

"No, I'll be d——d if it is!" cried the laird, bravely striking the table to augment the emphasis of his asseveration—"Mary Cunningham is my dochter, and the Craiglunds my estate."

"I thought," interrupted Sir Archibald, "that the Craiglunds was entailed?"

"And so it is," replied the laird; "but it's on heirs-general, and in the course of nature it will be Mary's."

"Oh!" exclaimed the earl, "in that case your sister herself might succeed?"

"What o' that?" cried the laird quickly.

"Nothing—O nothing!" replied his lordship carelessly; "but the chance of succeeding, though remote, may induce the old lady to place obstacles in the way of Miss Cunningham ever being married at all;" and his lordship added, with a very sentimental accent—"Human life is full of uncertainty, and the young as well as the old are the daily victims of death. Though the thought is painful, yet more extraordinary events have occurred than that of Miss Cunningham dying even before her father. Were her aunt to succeed to the family estate, the old lady might be induced, by some needy young fellow, to overlook her own advanced age. I would not affirm that she contemplates any such contingency; but in the casualties and follies of the world, there is a reasonable ground for supposing, not to say suspecting, that she may be actuated by considerations of that kind."

The laird looked alternately at each of the gentlemen present, while Sir Archibald, with a countenance expressive of the most alarming sagacity, said, "That accounts for it—that accounts for it! No one ever before could give a satisfactory reason why a gentleman, like my friend Craiglands here, should have kept his only daughter and heiress so long in such a state of seclusion; but none of us were aware that Miss Mizy might have interested motives for preventing the young lady from forming a suitable matrimonial connexion."

"De'il tak me!" exclaimed the laird, "but I'm thinking ye hae made a true guess, for I ne'er could get to the bottom o' my sister's objections to this young man and to that. When was there a more proper match than Tam Delap o' Southenan, that's heir to the whole tot o' his uncle's land and gatherings? and she gart the poor simple lassie true he was little better than silly.—Lordsake, Sir Andrew, I wish ye would but speer Mary's price?"

"With all my heart," cried our hero.

"Then gie's your hand, and a bargain be't, gin ye find her willing," cried the laird; and with that, stretching out his hand, he shook our hero's heartily. Upon which Sir Archibald insisted that a fresh bottle should be opened, to drink success to a courtship so sanctioned; but as it was not the policy of the allied powers to allow the laird time to revoke his pledge, the earl soon after proposed that they should join the ladies.

The laird, elevated by the wine, and the valorous sense of the independence he had shown, entered the drawing-room with a triumphant countenance, but somewhat unsteady in his steps, and with his hands stretched out as if he was groping his way: Miss Cunningham, on observing his condition, immediately rose and led him to a chair.

"That's a dawty!" was the delighted old gentleman's exclamation.—"It's a' settled—it's a' settled!"

"What's settled?" cried Miss Mizy.

"Settle thysel', Mizy, and dinna scaud thy lips in other folk's kail," retorted the laird; and he added exultingly,—"Leddies, do ye ken that me and Sir Andrew hae made a paction in presence of my lord and Sir Archibald, whereby it is covenanted between us, that he's to mak my dochter, Mary Cunningham,

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Leddy Wylie? Gang up to her, Sir Andrew—gang up, ye blate wee deevil, and gie her a smack on the tae cheek, and syne on the tother—that's the way to woo."

The ladies exchanged looks with one another; and Miss Cunningham, foreseeing some impending embarrassment, rose and proposed to her aunt, as the evening was far spent, that they should return home. The carriages were accordingly ordered, and, in the course of a few minutes, it was announced that they were at the door.

CHAPTER CIII.

AN ACCIDENT.

WHILE the laird in the dining-room was becoming generous with Auchinward's claret, Robin Taigle, in the servants'-hall, grew so mellow with the ale, that when the carriage was called, every object danced before his bewildered sight, and the sure and steadfast earth felt to him as if it were reeling beneath his steps; insomuch, that even daft Jamie said to him, "Robin, we hae a lang road before us; but I'm feart ye'll be mair fashed wi' the breadth than the length o't."

However, by the help of Sir Archibald's servants, Robin was placed in his saddle. Nevertheless, when the family came to embark, his condition was so apparent, that Sir Andrew, for whom Lord Sandysford's carriage was again in attendance, insisted that they should accept of it. The ladies would gladly have availed themselves of the offer—Miss Mizy declaring, that "it was a black-burning shame to be seen driven by sic a drunken betheral;" but the laird was inexorable.

"We hae our own carriage," said he; "and what for shouldna we tak the use o't? As for that do-na-gude, Robin, I'll let you see what I'll do wi' him when I get him hame. There shall be a revolution in the house ere lang, tak my word for't; so, sister, kipple up your coats and step in; and, Mary, gie me a grip o' your shouther."

Our hero, however, and the servants, saved her from the pressure of his weight; and after some effort, with their more vigorous shoves and pushes, he was raised into his seat. An inarticulate growl, intended for the customary "Jee, brutes!" from Robin, then admonished the horses that they were free to proceed.

Sir Andrew, apprehensive, from the state of the charioteer, that some accident might ensue, directed Lord Sandyford's servants to keep close behind with him, in order to be in readiness to assist. Nor was this precaution unnecessary; for, as daft Jamie predicted, the breadth of the road so troubled Robin, that the carriage went forward, tacking from side to side like a vessel beating against the wind—at every change of the zigzag driving to the very edge of jeopardy. More than once, to use another nautical phrase, it missed stays; and, but for the sagacity of "the brutes" in backing, in spite of Robin's whip, the whole concern would assuredly have been cast away in the ditch. However, under that special providence which the proverb says guards all persons in the situation of this worthy coachman, the family were enabled to pass the Girdle in safety; but opposite the south gate of Eglinton, Robin seemed to hesitate, as if at a loss whether to take the Stanecastle road, or to proceed straight forward—a circumstance which surprised his master, who said justly, that, had he been in his sober senses, he ought to have known the road better, and ordered him to go on to Irvine. But against this, Miss Mazy judiciously protested—affirming, in the most reasonable manner, that it would be a disgrace to them for ever to pass through the town with such a pirlet of a driver. Accordingly, at her suggestion, Robin was commanded by the laird, with many vituperative epithets, such as, "I'll learn you to fill yoursel fu'," and so forth, to take the wynd which leads from the Bullet-road to the Dinton-knowe; by which the family were spared from the gibes and jeers of the observant inhabitants of the ancient royal burgh.

Still all went well, and the evening was beautiful. As they drove down the Kilwinning road, the gentle features of the scenery on the right were rendered still more pleasing by the softening medium of a slight aerial haze; and the swelling hills

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in front, beyond the woods of Eglinton, as they rose in the sober livery of the twilight, seemed to assume an abrupt and mountainous character; while dark masses of cloud, intermingled with hoary mists, like the steaming vapours of a volcano, covered the summits of Goatfield, and gave it the appearance of Mount Etna, which it so much resembles in form and outline. But our travellers were not long permitted to contemplate the calm still beauties of the summer evening. Just as Robin crossed the Redburn bridge, by some unlucky and unguarded pull of the reins, one of the horses gave a sudden plunge, and the carriage was overturned in the hedge.

The ladies were speedily extricated, but the poor laird was lifted out insensible. He, however, soon recovered, and at first it did not appear he had received any material injury; but on being conveyed home with the ladies and the baronet in Lord Sandysford's coach, on alighting he complained of something no right with his inward parts; adding, however, that it was a merciful thing his head was so strong as to withstand the dunt that stunned him in the coupling.

Sir Andrew advised the ladies to send for a doctor, but this the old gentleman would not permit; for, among his other prejudices and affections, he nourished a dislike to the faculty, declaring that "since doctors had learned to keep counts like shopkeepers, when they get a man ill they hae as natural an interest to keep him ill as the wabsters and souters in the health and well-doing o' their customers." The better to colour his repugnance to send for Doctor Atomy, the medical friend of the family, he affected to make light of his hurt, by exerting a degree of energy and activity preternatural to his character. In the course of the night, however, he felt himself so seriously pained that he was obliged to raise the house.

In the mean time our hero, who had retired to his grandmother's, reflected with some degree of anxiety on the events of the day. He saw, in the caprice and prejudices of the laird, many ingredients calculated to embitter a connexion with his family; nor was he altogether satisfied with the cold and studied reserve with which Mary had treated him after dinner in the drawing-room. His experience of the world had not instructed

him in the devices of the female heart, and he was not aware that the very same demeanour which checked and repressed his ardour, and which made him doubt whether he ought even to disclose to her his long attachment, would, to a man more accustomed to the innocent wiles of womankind, have been regarded as the most encouraging symptom. In a word, he began to suspect that he had been betrayed by the influence of early recollections into a fond folly, and to think that, perhaps, the wisest step he could take would be to abandon his intention at once.

Why he should have given way to such reflections as these, especially as the obstacles hitherto opposed to his desires had been so greatly lessened in the course of the day, must, we imagine, be ascribed to the circumstances and vacillations of the lovers' lunacy. Certain it is that he fell asleep, after almost working himself into a persuasion that he ought not to think of irremediably uniting himself with a stock so knotted and knarled with obsolete prejudices as that of Craiglands; and that he awoke in the morning with the most delightful anticipations, as if, during sleep, his mind had unconsciously reasoned itself back again into a more congenial way of thinking. He was perfectly persuaded that the laird, with all his faults and foibles, was in the main a man possessed of many of the homely virtues that befits the character of a resident landlord.

Immediately after breakfast, he accordingly walked to The Place for the purpose of explaining to Mary the motives of his visit to Scotland; but on entering the parlour he found only Miss Mizy. "I fear," said she, "that my brother has gotten an inward injury, and we're a' sae concerned at the ill night he has passed, that we hae sent for Doctor Atomy to come immediately to see him." The baronet expressed his sorrow, and as the lady told us herself, "he sympathized in a feeling manner that showed both his great judgment and sensibility."

Mary, in the mean time, was attending her father, and perhaps, under the circumstances, her lover might that morning have left the house without seeing her, but for Bell Lampit, who now foresaw, by so many signs of intercourse and growing cordiality, that a wedding would ensue, and could not resist her

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desire to inform Miss Cunningham that the baronet was in the house.

"What's your will, Miss Mary?" said Bell, looking in at the door of the laird's room, as if she had been really summoned.

"I did not ring—it must have been my aunt," was the reply.

"Na, na, Miss Mary, she has other fish to fry!" exclaimed Bell in an audible whisper, stepping forward into the room with long tiptoe strides, using her arms and hands as if they had been wings to lighten her footfalls—"She's wi' Sir Andrew!"

"What's that tinkler tawpy doing here?"

"Eh! megsy, maister! I thought ye were soun' sleeping; hoo're ye the day, after the dreadful coup. Robin has gotten an awful cloor on the broo; we think his harnpan's surely dunklet."

"An I were at thee I would hoo're thee: out o' my presence this moment! De'il an the like of that hizzy was e'er in any creditable family!" exclaimed the laird.

"O maister!" retorted the learned Bell, "ye should thole better—a man struggling with calamity is a sight worthy of the gods!"

Mary was obliged to laugh at this mal-appropriation of one of Seneca's conceits, while, at the same time, she ordered Bell to leave the room.

"Ye see, Mary, my dear," said the old gentleman, "what it is to exceed the bounds of edication, for it's no to be doubted that too much learning has made yon lassie mad as well as the apostle Paul. The heads of the commonality are, in my opinion, not of a capacity to take in muckle mair than the plain truths o' Scripture and the Mothers' Carritches. The Question-book's ouer kittle for the best o' them; I, mysel', never got farther than 'No mere man.'"

The laird was proceeding in this way to give his opinion on the popular subject of general education, his fever disposing him to become talkative, when Miss Mazy entered.

"Mary," said the old lady significantly, "ye'll gang down the stair and entertain Sir Andrew, and I'll bide wi' your father till the doctor comes."

"Doctor!" vociferated the laird—"Wha the deevil has sent for the doctor to me? They had a stock o' impudence!—A doc-

tor to a bit birz, that I'll soon no be a prin the waur o'. I hae nae broo o' doctors; for though they may learn at the college to haggie aff a sair leg, or to howk out a rotten tooth, they ken as little about complaints in the stomach as a loch-leech, and no sae muckle; for the leech, poor thing, has a natural knowledge o' what it's about, and seeks nae fee but a pickle saut on it's neb, and a drap caller water in a bottle. Nane o' the droguery nor the roguery o' doctors for me."

"Brother, ye're maunnering," said Miss Mizy, Mary having in the mean time left the room. "I wish ye would be still and compose yoursel', and no fash your head with sic aishmaclavers."

"Whar's Mary?" cried the laird; "I would rather hae her here than thee; for she's o' a mild and a meek nature, the which is a biessed inheritance, as Mr Symington said on Sunday, and worthy of all acceptation; whereas there be those of a worldly grain and substance, coarse to heckle, and ill to card, and needing mony a rug and rive by the powerfu' hand of chastisement, before their souls are wrought into garments o' praise."

"Brother," said Miss Mizy kindly, struck by the growing incoherency of the old gentleman, "I dout ye're waur than ye let wit."

"I'm unco dry," was the answer. "It's a wonder o' nature, that the mair a body drinks he aye grows the drier; but Sir Archibald's claret was of a fine quality; and really yon Sir Andrew's a comical creature—I trow I gart the perjink English yerl laugh, when I said that Sir Andrew would never be able to kiss our Mary, unless he could speel up and get his taes in her pouches. It's my fear that their bairns will be sic wee modiwarts o' things, that when they begin to tottle about the house, we'll hae to tie bells to their backs to hear whar they gang, for I'm thinking they'll be running in aneath the beds. 'Odsake, but I would be blithe to see the wee totties spinning about the floor like peeries."

"I beg," said his sister, with an accent of anxiety and grief, "that you will try to keep yoursel' quiet. It's no right to indulge sic vagaries."

"Aren't they my ain grandchilder!" exclaimed the laird. "Would ye hae me as void o' naturalty as them as you, that's

but their auntie ? and no even that, for ye're a remove further off, Mizy. I'll send to Glasgow for a hobbyhorse to Willy, 'cause he's ca'd baith for me and my ain poor Willy that deet of his wounds. Many a sore hour o' suffering he had ; but he was a brave lad wi' a leal heart. His woun' wasna on the back ; but won in the front o' the battle, and worn on his breast like a star o' honour."

The poor old man's paternal feelings overcame him, and he lay weeping with a childish fondness and simplicity, till Miss Mizy, unable any longer to control her apprehensions at the rapid progress of the delirium, hastily ran down stairs to communicate her alarm.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL.

WHEN Miss Mizy entered the parlour, she disturbed her niece and the baronet in the middle of a very interesting conversation. He had not actually fallen on his knees before the adored object of his romantic fondness, as the novelists of the feminine gender would describe a heroine similarly situated ; but, after adverting to the occurrences of the preceding day, he was advancing as rapidly towards a disclosure of the wish nearest his heart as could reasonably be expected from a man of his temperance in all things, and Miss Cunningham was listening as if she enjoyed the fulfilment of an ancient prediction, calm and smiling, but with a slow and profound emotion, that affected the very bottom of her heart—a smooth rolling swell and undulation of the spirit, which a little more vehemence in her lover might have thrown into all those tempestuous commotions which formerly belonged to the lady's part of the performance in a declaration of love. She had long, for we may now speak freely of her sentiments, contemplated, with a strange feeling of wonder, blended with pleasure, the arrangement that fate appeared to be making for the era which had now arrived. Every new instance of our

hero's advancement, as it came to her knowledge, contained, as it were, an admonition of their predestinated union; and this presentiment was never affected by any of those saddening influences which the mystic sense and auguries of fatalism commonly excite. The image of Wylie was associated in her imagination with the bright and joyous days of childhood; and his small and ungainly figure was in her imagination so wreathed, if the expression may be allowed, with the garlands of happy recollections, that it was endeared to the eyes of habitual affection with something more interesting than the advantages of personal appearance.

"Mary," said her aunt, bursting hastily into the room, "it's my opinion your father's gaun by himsel'."

Miss Cunningham, alarmed at the news, started from her seat and hurried up stairs. At the same moment Dr Atomy arrived, and daft Jamie, who was lounging about the house, on seeing the doctor alight, ran forward to hold his horse.

"Jamie," said the doctor, "is that you?"

"Deed is't," replied Jamie, taking the bridle; "it's my ain mother's son."

"And who is your mother, Jamie?" rejoined the doctor.

"She's vera weel, I thank you, sir," was the answer; which so discomposed the gravity of the doctor, that he came into the parlour with a gayer countenance than suited the occasion, inasmuch that Miss Mizy put on a visage proportionally more solemn.

"My brother's vera ill, doctor," said she, "and Sir Andrew Wylie—this is Sir Andrew—is just waiting to hear what ye think o' him."

"Is this the great Sir Andrew Wylie?" exclaimed the doctor, looking towards our hero, and bending forward with an expression of amazement in his face, which gradually assumed the cast of veneration, and, before the baronet had time to make any reply, he went up to him and said, "What is your opinion, Sir Andrew, of the late fall in the funds?"

"Doctor," interposed Miss Mizy, "ye maunna enter on your bad times just noo—gang first and see my brother; and then ye can come and converse wi' Sir Andrew about the breaking o' the government."

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The baronet, perceiving the solicitude of the old lady, in the hopes that by a precise answer the doctor would the sooner go to the patient, replied, that he considered the recent fall a temporary fluctuation.

"I am most happy to hear you think so!" exclaimed the doctor, and was proceeding to enlarge on the subject, when Miss Mizy again interrupted him.

"My brother," said she, "has met wi' a severe birz and contusion, and he's in a roving fever."

"The fall has been considerable," rejoined the doctor, thinking of the funds.

"Deed it was a mercy we weren a' killed outright," replied Miss Mizy; for the chaise made a clean whammle, and the laird was lowermost."

The doctor, still intent on his own topic, said to Sir Andrew, "I trust, however, that the effects will not be permanent. It is melancholy to think how uncertain every thing is."

"Ye ne'er, doctor, made a wiser observe," said Miss Mizy, morally; "for, after spending a most pleasant day at Auchinward, wha could hae thought we would hae to dree so soon sic a penance for our pleasure?"

Dr Atomy looked round with a compassionate smile at Miss Mizy, and then began to speak on the common popular topics of the day to the baronet, who, not altogether pleased with his pertinacity, reminded him of the object of his visit. The doctor, keep him free from "bad times," was an amiable and humane character, and this admonition was effectual: he immediately followed Miss Mizy to her brother's apartment.

To the first question which he put to the laird, the reply was characteristic.

"I'm vera weel, doctor," said the patient—"ne'er was better; but there's a something I dinna understand wi' me, for a' that; and I'm fashed wi' strange folk; crowds o' them come and sit behind the curtains at my bed-head, and the de'il a ane of them will speak out, and tell me their cracks; but they continue whispering and whispering, and hugger-muggering, as if they were smuggling something awa'."

Both his sister and daughter, who were standing beside the

doctor, were much affected by this speech, and could not refrain from tears; for it was too evident, from the doctor's manner that there was then indeed something about to be removed. The whisperings of which the dying man complained, were the voices of those who had been sent to bear him from this mortal world.

The doctor, however, as delicately as he could, expressed his fears for the consequences of the injury which the old gentleman had suffered, and having prescribed some simple medicine, rather to uphold the character of the profession than with any hope of doing the patient good, soon after retired, and Bell Lampit was almost immediately dispatched to the manse, to request the attendance of Mr Symington.

Bell, who never tarried on her errands between one person and another, met the minister walking leisurely by himself, on the shady side of the high-road.

"Ye maun come up to The Place directly, sir," was her salutation; "for we're a' feared that the laird's vital spark's gaun out. Miss Mary sent me wi' her compliments to bid you come."

"I'm very sorry to hear this.—I understood his hurt was of no consequence," replied the clergyman.

"'Deed, sir," said Bell, "his life is just like the dying lamp's unsteady flame. 'To be or not to be,' is the state of his precious soul; so I hope ye'll no delay, for it will be a sad and a sore thing if the laird's alloo't to jump the shoal o' time like the beasts that perish." And holding a jargon dialect of this sort, Bell returned home with the minister; but before reaching the house the inflammation of the brain had so rapidly advanced, that the patient was in no condition to receive the spiritual physician.

In the course of the afternoon the violence of the symptoms abated, and for several days the laird languished under the evident decay of all his faculties. He was not, apparently, very ill, but his strength was entirely prostrated, and he lingered within the imbecility of the second childhood, in its most helpless state, united with a patient silliness that could not be seen without sorrow. He had lost the sense of present objects, and fondled over the recollections of former years. Sometimes he thought of his lady, and would talk to her of their household

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concerns—occasionally chiding her for being low-spirited, and reminding her of the great honour and advantages of fortune which she had acquired by their marriage. But the playfulness of his children in their childhood chiefly engaged his fancy; and he would chuckle with the greatest glee at their little pranks. In the midst, however, of his mirth, some gleam of reminiscence would shoot across his mind, and, suddenly recollecting that his darling Willy was long dead, he would break out into fresh and loud lamentations, like the grief of an innocent child that bewails the loss of a favourite bird. In this condition he continued seven days. In the afternoon of the eighth, prostrate nature seemed to rally her forces; but death was more powerful, and she sank in the contest.

Though Craiglands possessed few of those qualities which attract general popularity or personal esteem, he was yet so blameless in his life and so easy as a landlord, that he enjoyed among his tenants and village neighbours something kinder and stronger than either popularity or esteem. The homeliness of his manners came in aid of their national reverence for the honours of birth and rank, and made them yield a homage of feeling and respect when they heard of his death, as profound as that which is paid to the memory of far greater beneficence, talent, and worth. He was, besides, the last of an ancient line, a circumstance in itself calculated to awaken interesting associations; for although his sister and daughter survived, the country folks around considered the family extinguished by the death of the last male heir. The day of his funeral was, in consequence, one of great solemnity in Stoneyholm, and all the neighbouring hamlets. Not only the gentry, but the tenants attended, and many of the inhabitants of the village: a vast concourse of old and young assembled at The Place; and the retinue that followed the hearse was in perfect accordance with the pagantry which the people thought due to the obsequies of the last laird.

Among several old persons in the village who had spent their lives in the service of the Craighlands, was Thomas Daisy, a very aged man, of such a venerable appearance that it was a common saying that nobody could tell when he was young.

He had been upwards of seventy years nominally the gardener; but for some time prior to this period, he had been pensioned with a widow in Stoneyholm. Feeble with extreme age and infirmity, he had not strength to join the other mourners at The Place, but he waited for the procession at the door of the cottage where he resided, and as it passed he came forward leaning on his staff. Holding his hat in his hand, and with slow and tottering steps, he followed at some little distance. His venerable appearance, his long flowing grey hairs, and the silent sorrow with which he moved along by himself, attracted the attention of the children of Mr Tannyhill's school, and they gradually detached themselves from the spectators, and forming a circle round him, as he falteringly walked forward, insensibly fell into the order of a little procession, of which he was the leader.

When the hearse reached the gate of the churchyard, the carriages of the gentry drew aside, and the coffin was taken out and placed on the spakes. This occupied a little time, during which old Thomas, attended by the children, came up, and passed on towards the family burying-place. It was an ancient, massy, walled enclosure, ornamented with sculptured skulls and urns: a tablet, on which the arms of the Craiglands Cunninghams had been emblazoned, in the rude carving of the sixteenth century, occupied a niche over the entrance. This trophy of the olden time had long been respected by the villagers; but during the incumbency of Doctor Dozadeal, the churchyard gate happened to be allowed to fall from its hinges, by which the school-boys, in their play-hours, having free access, it had suffered among other of their dilapidations. Certainly, however, from no malice against the family; on the contrary, solely, if we rightly recollect our own juvenile sentiments on the occasion, (being concerned in the devastation,) from a most conscientious abhorrence of the idolatrous beasts of papistry and prelacy, some traditionary opinion having arisen in the school, that the said arms, with the supporters, had been idols of old, belonging to that once Babylonish sanctuary, the Abbey of Kilwinning. Nor was the notion entirely without a shadow of historical fact; for the founder of the Craiglands Cunninghams was a cadet

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of the Glencairn family; and when the pious Earl of that name herried the religious houses of Ayrshire during the Reformation, Sir Firebrand Cunningham of Burnthebyke, came in for a share of the plunder, and so laid the subsequent grandeur of his descendants, in the portion which he received of the domains of that rich abbacy. The laird, at the time when the arms were defaced, had been officiously, as we well recollect it was deemed, told of the exploit, and had vowed a terrible vengeance, and also to restore the sculpture, neither of which, however, he performed; so that it was observed as an ominous and remarkable thing, that the escutcheon of the family was entirely obliterated.

When the coffin was borne to the entrance of the sepulchre, the spades were drawn out, and the undertaker's men having carried it within the enclosure, it was placed on two planks over the grave, till a few particular friends who followed it had received the cords attached to the handles. At this moment old Thomas, with his head still bare, came forward opposite to the entrance, and as the planks were removed, and the remains of his old master were lowered into the earth, he was unable to control his emotion. When the spectators in silence uncovered, as the coffin reached its last rest—a homage to the dispensations of heaven more affecting than any other funeral service—he sunk down on his knees, and continued in that posture till the grave was filled, the earth trodden in, and the turf laid for ever.

CHAPTER CV.

THE CONCLUSION

It is, in our opinion, a more awful thing to be born than to die; but without descanting upon the question, it cannot be doubted that it is easier to write the first than the last chapter of a book. Every one of our readers must have seen, that the laird's death, though it no doubt delayed, yet it was not an event calculated to subtract any thing from the happiness of our

hero. Indeed, within as short a period as decency would permit, and shorter too than the prudent Miss Mizy thought decent, Mary and the baronet were united. It would have afforded us the greatest pleasure to describe the notable tasks and cares which Miss Mizy took upon herself at the wedding—how she received a roving commission from her niece, the heiress and bride, to go into Glasgow, and, in conjunction with Miss Peggy Picken, there to make the most judicious purchases for the bridal paraphernalia—in what manner, for two whole days, the judicious maiden gentlewomen went from shop to shop, inspecting and pricing the articles, until they had ascertained where the best could be got cheapest—how Miss Peggy caught a severe cold in the reconnoitre, and was obliged to wear a piece of red flannel round her throat, a most sovereign remedy, when they sallied forth to make the actual purchases—in what manner they were received on that occasion, in consequence of having taxed the politeness and civility of the shopkeepers, to the utmost stretch of human patience, in the preliminary visits—but all these things would demand a circumstantiality of narration totally incompatible with the rapid summation of a concluding chapter. Let it suffice then to say, that Sir Andrew and Mary, after being three several Sundays proclaimed in church, were united by Mr Symington at The Place in the holy bands of matrimony, in presence only of the venerable grandmother, Mr Tannyhill, and the servants, Miss Mizy acting as bridesmaid. On this occasion Bell Lampit, seeing old Martha affected to tears, thought proper, at the conclusion of the blessing, to tune her pipes, and send forth a most vociferous sobbing and wail; which, however, instead of awakening any sympathy, set all present a-laughing.

Lord and Lady Sandfyord had, immediately after the laird's death, returned to Chastington Hall, where, as soon as an easy journey permitted, they were visited by the happy pair.

During that visit, much to the surprise of the Marquis of Avonside, Sir Andrew accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and ended his parliamentary career; an event which the marquis attributed to the exercise of some sinister influence on the part of the Earl of Sandfyord, whom his lordship considered as envi-

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the Marquis of Hundreds, and ich the marquis ence on the part nsidered as envi-

ous of the address by which he had secured the great talents of the baronet to the ministerial side. Sir Andrew also, at the same time, closed his lucrative connexion with Mr Vellum, declaring, that he was satisfied with the fortune he had acquired. The earl and countess again urged him to become their neighbours, and Castle Rooksborough, which his lordship had in the mean time purchased, was formally offered as a temptation; but firm in his intention to promote the welfare of his native country, he resisted alike the solicitations of interest and friendship, and returned to Scotland, where he has since continued to reside permanently; making, however, occasional visits with his lady to his old southern friends—in the last of which he heard that Ferrers, who occasioned so much unhappiness to the countess, had been killed in the Peninsula; and that the rector, who was also dead, had amply provided for the orphan Monimia.

The only part of our hero's conduct which has excited any speculation, and we mention it without comment, since it may be deemed equivocal, is the manner in which he has acted towards his grandmother. Many of the villagers at Stoneyholm thought, when he rebuilt the mansion-house of Wylie, that he ought to have removed Martha to it; indeed Lady Wylie herself was very urgent with the old woman to live with them, but the baronet said nothing; while Martha declared that they would both better show their regard, by allowing her to spend the evening of her days in her own way, peaceably in the service of him who had vouchsafed, of his own free grace, to shed such unmerited abundance on her declining years.

By an arrangement conducted through the medium of Sir Archibald Maybole, Mr Symington got a call to the parish of Auchinward; and Mr Tannyhill, to the surprise and delight of the people, who had long venerated his amiable and gentle dispositions, was promoted from the school to the church, where he still exercises with undiminished mildness the pastoral duties of the cure. On a late occasion, when in the neighbourhood, we went to his "Examine," chiefly drawn thither by mere curiosity, many years having passed away since we were present at any thing of the kind. We found him seated in the venerable carved walnut elbow-chair, amidst the elders, in the session-house, lis-

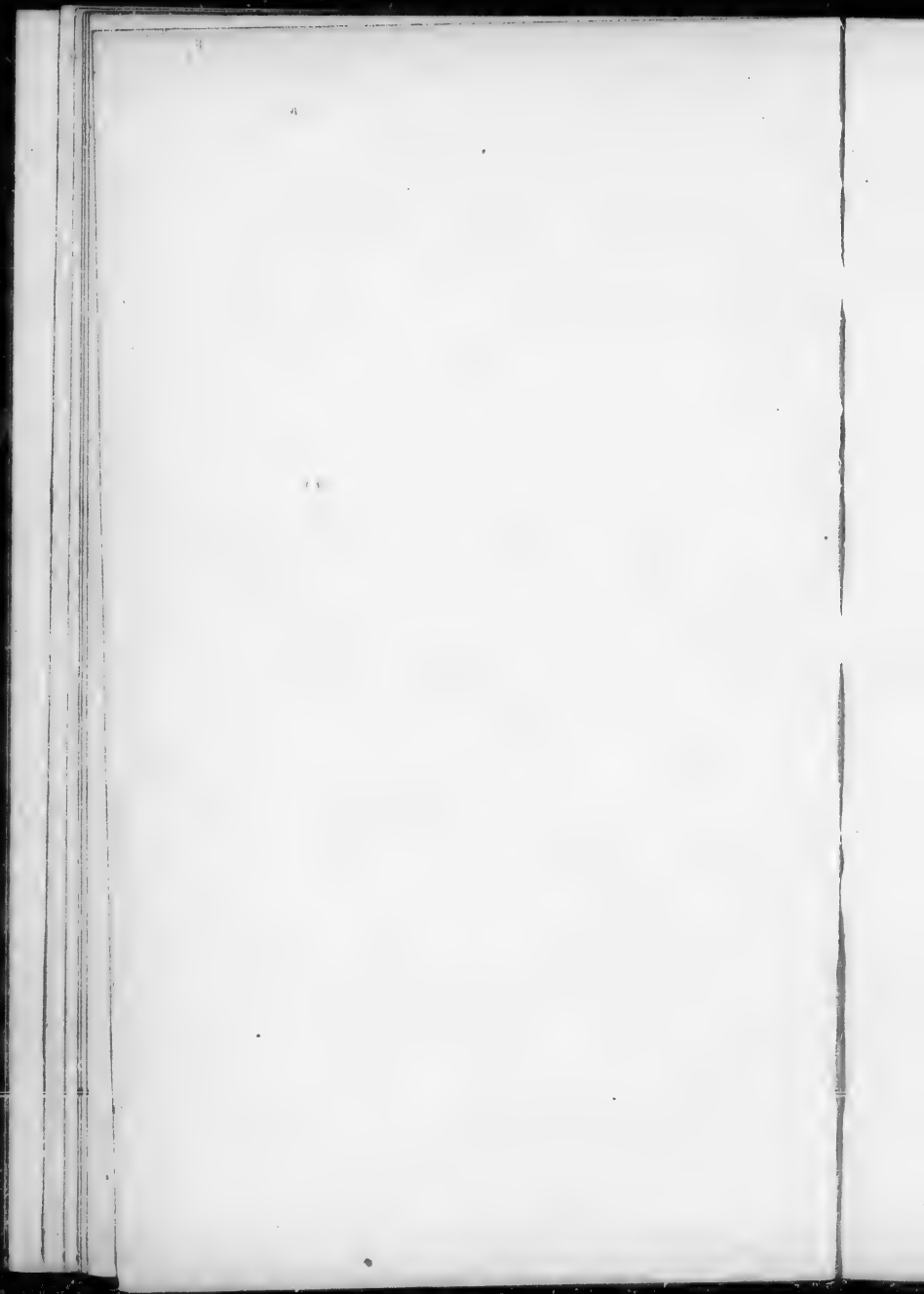
tening with patient affection to the replies of the youth of both sexes assembled; and it seemed to our observant eyes, that he often sighed to remark how much they were inferior in religious knowledge to their orthodox parents. Among others present was a lad, Robin Kennedy, clothed in the sprucest cut of clipping Jock, who, under the style and title of Mr Shaper, had, after a three months' insight with Messrs Buts and Lining, clothiers on the South Bridge of Edinburgh, supplanted his old master, Thomas Steek, in the business of the young farmers of the parish. Robin Kennedy was dressed in his Sunday suit; but happening unfortunately to be seated on a bench where a nail protruded, in standing up to answer the question, "What does every sin deserve?" he tore his breeches, and exclaimed, looking back at the nail, and feeling the wounded corduroy—"God's curse!"—"Very well, Robin," said Mr Tannyhill; "but soberly and coolly."

For some reason or another not explained in any satisfactory manner to the public, Miss Mizy is permitted to enjoy The Place by herself, where she is sometimes visited by the baronet and Lady Wylie, with their children. But on those occasions the drawing-room is always carefully locked; for the children, as she has herself assured us, are such tempests, particularly the boys, that they have no mercy on the furniture. One of them, before the precaution of locking the door, actually picked off the putty which, as we have described, concealed the face of the blooming May in the emblematic picture of that month. And here we should not omit to inform our readers, that when we last called at The Place, Miss Mizy told us that in sorting some old papers she had made a great literary discovery; namely, a volume written by her brother, in his own handwriting, containing, as she assured us, "a most full account of all manner of particularities anent the decay of the ancient families of the west country,"—a work that we have some reason to hope Sir Andrew may induce her to transmit to us, in order that we may arrange it for publication; for though "the laird," as she observed, "wasna a man of book lair, he had yet a nerve at observation, and a faculty to note whatsoever came to pass, in a manner just extraordinary, as any rational person, no over critical

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about points and phrases, may very clearly discern." Should the baronet succeed in procuring the manuscript, we shall lose no time in sending it to press for the entertainment and edification of the public. Meanwhile, having brought his own biography to a close, we leave him, as all heroes ought to be left, in the full enjoyment of the manifold gifts and felicities which prudence and good fortune united can procure.

THE END OF SIR ANDREW WYLIE.



ILLUSTRATIONS, ANECDOTES,

AND

CRITICAL REMARKS.

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ILLUSTRATIONS, &c.

THE criticisms on "Sir Andrew Wylie," at the time of its appearance, were of a very mixed character. Some of them were tissues of sheer abuse, against the reception of which the obvious malignity was a sufficient caveat; and some were prompted by an evident envy of that popularity which "The Annals," "The Legatees," and "The Provost," had secured to the author. Only one or two were fair, and acknowledged the merits of the book—when compared with the productions just mentioned—as of a mixed character.

For the first time in this series of works, the author trode upon English ground, and ventured upon a delineation of the most artificial of all states of existence—aristocratic society. The task was one for which neither his powers nor his tastes were peculiarly adapted; but when we regard the character of Lord Sandyford, which is drawn with philosophical nicety, it would be harsh to say that he has altogether failed. The episode of the gipsies, although in some degree an excrescence on the main story, is acutely and picturesquely managed; and the language of the old mother, in assuming the tone of the sybil, is often impregnated with high poetical feeling.

It would be vain, however, to conceal that the Scottish parts of the narrative are by far the best, and that the characteristic genius of the author is much more vividly displayed in the first and third volumes. The old grandmother, Martha—Tannyhill, the gentle and modest "dominie"—Miss Mizy—the Laird—and Mary Cunningham—are all sketches full of life, and faithfully true to nature; nor do Bell Lampit and Daft Jamie find less willingly a place in our recollections. The hero himself is drawn with great vigour and boldness, but, perhaps, is after all the most questionable in the book if we regard its probabilities.

Sir Andrew Wylie was in England the most popular of all Mr

Galt's writings. To what it owed this pre-eminence, if not from the greater admixture of English dialogue and portraiture, it would be difficult to say.

The annotations are restricted, principally for the reason already mentioned, to a few illustrative remarks by Mr Galt himself.

"Of all my manifold sketches, I repine most at an alteration which I was induced, by the persuasion of a friend, to make, on the original tale of Sir Andrew Wylie; as it now stands, it is more like an ordinary novel than that which I first projected, inasmuch as, instead of giving, as intended, a view of the rise and progress of a Scotchman in London, it exhibits a beginning, a middle, and an end, according to the most approved fashion for works of that description. But no particular story is engrafted on my original idea, and perhaps, the book by the alteration is greatly improved; it is not, however, the work I had planned, in which certainly there would have been no such episode as the gipsies introduced—an episode, however, which I have heard frequently mentioned as the best contrived part of the narrative.

"The second edition was inscribed to my amiable friend the Earl of Blessington, in consequence of a remark which his lordship made to me when he was reading it; speaking of Lord Sandford's character, he observed, that it must be very natural, for, in the same circumstances, he would have acted in a similar manner, and he seemed not to have the least idea, that he was himself the model of the character: perhaps I never received so pleasing a compliment. Of course the story has nothing to do with his lordship; indeed in selecting scenes and incidents for the likenesses I endeavour to portray, I only aspired to make my *dramatis personæ* speak and act after the manner of the models; just as Sir Joshua Reynolds persuaded the first Lord Duncan to stand to him as Jupiter, in the celebrated picture of Hercules strangling the serpents, which he painted for that arch-empress Catherine II., as emblematic of the progress of civilization in the Russian empire."

"*Origin of the interview between Sir Andrew Wylie and King George the Third; with anecdotes of other members of the royal family.*"

"At the suggestion of a friend, I am induced to mention several accidental circumstances, which he thinks will be amusing to my readers, particularly to give an explanation of the origin of the

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interview, in Windsor Park, between Sir Andrew Wylie and George the Third. He informs me, that it is considered as the transcript of a real occurrence, and that I am supposed to have had, myself, a meeting with his majesty similar to the scene described; otherwise, it is thought, his familiar manner could not have been so represented.

"The supposition is not correct in fact, but the impression which I entertain of two droll incidents with the 'half gilly, half gut-chard' old king, has contributed to the force of the picture. Some eight-and-twenty years ago, my friends, Park and Spence, were in London, and I went with them to see Windsor Castle. Wyatt's great staircase was then nearly finished, but the interior scaffolding was not all removed. In looking at the construction, I got up the main flight of steps, and was gazing about, when the king was announced. Before I could get down, his majesty, with the architect, came in, and I was obliged, in consequence, to remain for some time standing where I was.

"The king observed us, particularly myself, who was so conspicuous, and lingered with Mr Wyatt, until he had satisfied his curiosity by looking at us; speaking all the time, 'his tongue never lay,' and looking about as he was speaking. It was evident that he spoke more at random than seriously addressed the architect, being occupied in noticing us. Something in his manner drew my attention, and from that interview, which lasted probably several minutes, I caught a durable remembrance of his peculiarities.—I see him still.

"The other occasion was still more characteristic of the good intentioned venerable man. It was on the morning of that day, on which he dissolved the parliament of the Whig administration, formed after the death of Mr Pitt. I happened to be with a friend, at morning prayers, in the oriel chapel of the Castle. The king was there, and the late princess Amelia, with a few attendants, besides the gentlemen of the chapelry; in all, about twenty persons. It was a sight worthy of remembrance. The old man remained seated, with an humble worshipping demeanour, while the prayer for the king was said, but he stood up, and repeated aloud, with pathos, the petition for the people.

"With this really touching solemnity, all gravity, however, fled from me. It is well known that his majesty was very near-sighted,

a defect which caused him to hold the prayer-book close to his face: over the top of the leaves, with the sly simplicity of an urchin at school, he frequently took a peep at us, but whenever he caught my eye, cowered, as it were, down, afraid, and 'conned his task' in the most exemplary manner. The way he did this was exceedingly amusing; but the worst of it was, that I could not conceal the effect, and accordingly 'I and the king' continued to play at bo-peep during all the remainder of the service.

"To these two incidents, as they may be called, I owe those particular traits of individuality which have been embodied in the scene with Sir Andrew Wylie; and which, I must believe, are not unlike. I know, from good authority, that George the Fourth remarked, in reading the description, it was 'by far the likeliest portrait of his majesty he had ever seen.'

"It often struck me, that the late Duke of Kent had much of his father's manner. I was, for many years immediately preceding his death, honoured with his royal highness's condescension, and I have still, among my papers, several curious documents which he gave to me, illustrative of domestic matters in the royal family. The occasion was this: circumstances, which need not be explained, led him to incur debts, and he was advised, I think foolishly, to apply to parliament to discharge them. He mentioned the circumstance to me, and I took the liberty of at once condemning the advice. From less to more, he mentioned it had been suggested to him that he had a legal claim. This I knew he had not; and sensible, that an application on such a ground might lead to unpleasant discussions, I recommended him to consult competent legal advisers.

"His royal highness, knowing that I was acquainted with Sir Archibald Macdonald, who had been chief baron, put the papers into my custody, to show to him, and requested me to sound him on the subject. Sir Archibald, at once pronounced the same opinion that I had done, and went immediately to Sir William Grant, the eminent master of the rolls, who also concurred, and strongly deprecated any sort of public proceeding. I reported progress, and, in the end, the duke did not apply for public money, though he conferred on the subject with different influential gentlemen.

"Among these papers, was a long well-written letter, by the duke himself, to his brother the Prince Regent, noticing some of the circumstances alluded to. His royal highness sent a groom to

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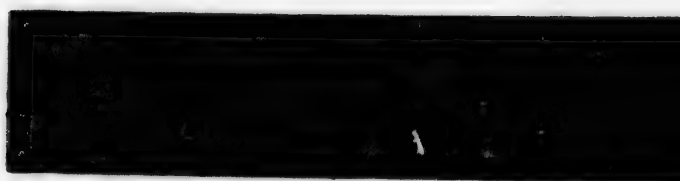
me for the copy of this letter, before five o'clock in the morning, on the day he left London for the last time, when he went to the west of England: the other papers he allowed to remain.

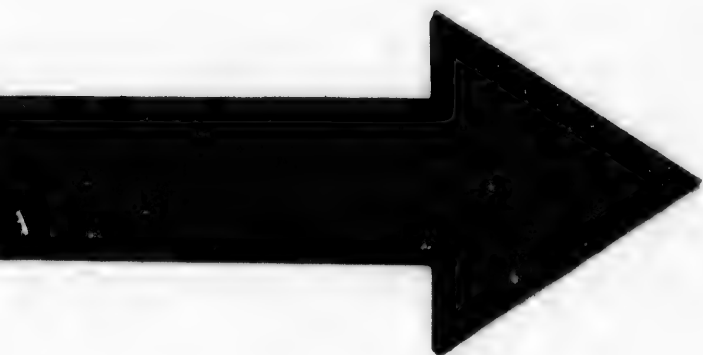
"By the way, to this untimely sending of the groom, 'thereby hangs a tale,' when should be told as an anecdote of that singular good nature, which is peculiar to the members of the royal family.

"His Royal Highness was in the practice of commanding me to come to him, often at times very inconvenient; frequently, between five and six o'clock, which was my dinner hour. This had occurred more than once; and one day, when I was engaged to a particular party, it so vexed me that without once, in my fit of self-absorption, thinking of his rank, I resolved to have an end put to the custom. Accordingly, frying with anger, and growing fiercer as I walked faster through Hyde Park to the palace, by thinking of the inconvenience, I was shown into the room where the duke was sitting, and began immediately to deliver myself of my cogitations. He listened for a short time, and, before I had done, gave an exceedingly good-natured laugh at my remonstrance. It dissolved the spell; I saw at once my absurd violation of etiquette, and knew not where to look. But, with a kind of boyish playfulness, he good-humouredly admitted the justice of my complaint. After that time, he generally requested me to come at hours which he thought would be convenient.—With the exception of this final message, he was always very considerate. An early riser, the hour was of no importance to him.

"I have also had occasion to be sensible of the affability of the Duke of York, on several particular occasions; quite often enough to justify a man in my station to be more than pleased. It will be recollected, that a public dinner was arranged in commemoration of George the Third, ostensibly, but really to get up a subscription to defray the expense of a monumental group of sculpture. Nothing could be more flattering than the prospect; the Duke of York agreed to take the chair, and the whole clanjamphry of the court promised to attend. But after all 'this beauteous dawn,' some of the back-stair gentry went to his royal highness, and remonstrated with him against countenancing such a subscription; the duke, in consequence, determined not to go, which was, of course,

'A sign for all the courtiers to be sick.'





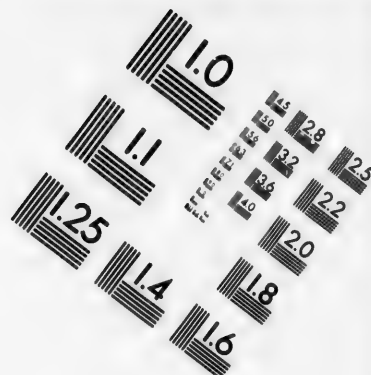
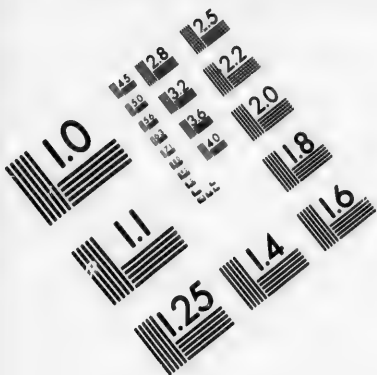
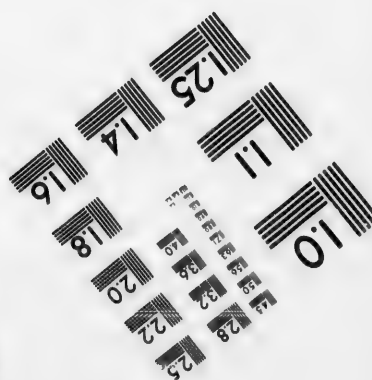
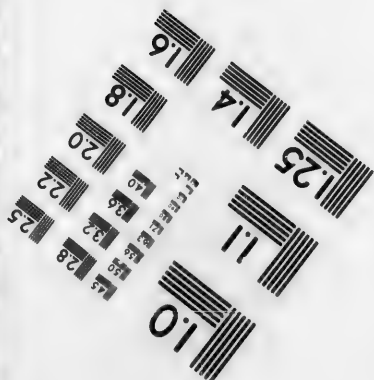
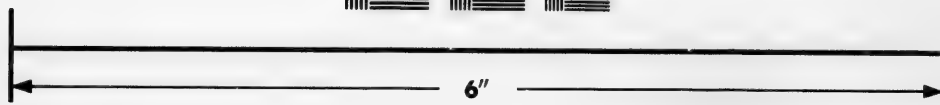
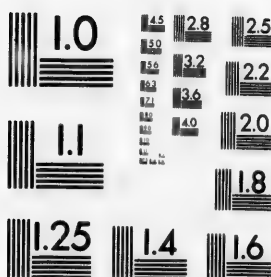


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"It was evident, that every one who had taken an interest in the festival, stood on the imminent verge of ridicule. It could not be put off without great expense. I went to Lord Blessington, who was one of the stewards, and represented to him how we all stood. After much consideration, it was determined to try how we could work upon the duke; so accordingly, we walked to the Horse Guards together, and got his royal highness's promise to come on condition that nothing should be said about the subscription. The dinner thus passed off 'charmingly well,' with all its constellations, and I dare say is remembered even to this hour; but the monumental group 'lies mouldering in the clay,' nor has the secret of the duke's coming to the barren feast been, till now, disclosed.

"The Duke of York, like all the refined of the human race, had a very civilized regard for choice cookery. Once, at some Scottish feast, or dinner of the Highland Society, I was sitting opposite, when, with an air, the landlord placed before him a *haggis*. It was evidently ill made; the bag was dingy—altogether an ugly, flabby, desultory trencherful of 'fat things.' The duke, alarmed at the apparition, cried to me, 'Galt, what is that?' Fascinated at the sight, I could not resist the temptation, and replied gravely, 'a boiled pair of bagpipes.'—Tell it not in Gath,—even at the risk of being reviled in Scotland for ever, his royal highness immediately ordered the

'Great chieftain of the pudding race'

ignominiously away.

"For the kind notice of the Duke of Sussex, I have now, in the course of a long period,—about seven-and-twenty years,—had frequently occasion to feel indebted. His Royal Highness has always treated me with the greatest condescension; invited me to dine with him at the palace, and to his conversations; but his uniform kindness has been more valued than even these distinctions.

"To the other members of the royal family, I am unknown; but the late king, when he read the 'Spaewife,' was pleased to express a wish that the author should know it had given him much pleasure, and spoke to me on my first introduction at court; an honour, as I was told.

"I mention these things, because the propriety of doing so has been suggested to me; at the same time, that I frankly confess

marks of distinction have been ever agreeable to me, but I have great doubts of having accomplished anything deserving of notice. The man does not know himself, who is not constantly apprehensive lest he mistake, in his vanity, notoriety for reputation; the recognition of the privileged great of society is not of any value, without the consciousness of having done something to deserve it."
—GALT'S *Autobiography*, Vol. ii. p. 274—283.

THE END.

